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Captain Antle
The Sailor's Friend

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To the Armed Forces and Merchant Marine**

CAPTAIN ANTLE

THE SAILOR'S FRIEND

BY

CHARLES MORTIMER

BOSTON

DAMRELL & UPHAM

The Old Corner Bookstore

283 Washington St.

1898

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BY CHARLES HENRY ST. JOHN



THEY that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters ;
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth the waves thereof.
They mount up to heaven,
They go down again to the depths :
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wit's end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then they are glad because they be quiet ;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

CAPTAIN ANTLE

THE SAILOR'S FRIEND

I.

MY early life was passed in an eastern seaport which, in those days, could boast of an extensive and prosperous commerce with all quarters of the world. Fleets of magnificent ships and square-rigged vessels rode proudly in the harbor or surrounded the wharves with a forest of masts. Owing to causes not necessary to specify, shipping has long since all but forsaken those waters, and wharves which were once alive with business are now deserted and gone to decay.

From the fact that a great proportion of the inhabitants were more or less interested in maritime affairs, nearly every seaman, certainly every master-mariner, was a familiar figure about town, and his characteristics known to all. While a number of these "old salts" were highly esteemed, both as citizens and sailors (the majority of them being neither better nor worse than their class everywhere), there were a few whose reputation was a reproach to the trade, and who, but for their success and efficiency as navigators, would scarcely have been endured for a single voyage. Among the most

notorious of the latter class was the person whom I shall attempt to describe in the following pages — Captain George Antle.

Such a terror was George Antle, not only to the whole ship's company which he commanded, but to all who had any dealings with him, that he became proverbial, and to be called "a regular Antle" was considered anything but complimentary. He was a man with a temper so quick, uncertain, and violent, that a word or even a glance was often sufficient to rouse his ire; and then, as the almanac reads, "look out for squalls."

A stalwart sailor, with fierce, gray-green eyes deep set in a square face covered with tawny hair, his aspect, when excited, was that of a lion, a blow from whose "paw" would prove fatal to the strongest. Even the wind of this formidable weapon was sufficiently paralyzing as it swung past the retreating nose of his antagonist.

"Feared and hated by all," I presume you expect me to add. By no means. Feared, possibly, by some; but scarcely hated, because, to give Antle his due, he was possessed of a manly, generous nature, and many of his worst exhibitions of passion were in defense of others' rights rather than his own. When once roused, however, it was best not to cross his path or permit anything of a movable description, such as a chair or table, to stand in his way; for it would inevitably need repairs, if enough of the fragments could be found to make it worth while.

How a wife might have fared at his hands can only be

conjectured, as no woman, up to the date of the reader's introduction to him, seems to have cared to run the risk. Possibly the captain's own good sense may have forewarned him of the "failure" of any such alliance.

As a master-mariner, however, no abler man than Captain Antle sailed out of port or trod a quarter-deck. Of his voyages, he seldom or ever made a failure; and his ship, the "Saucy Lass," had the credit of being always the most successful of the fleet.

In spite of Antle's reputation as a martinet and "terror to evil doers," he rarely had any great difficulty in procuring a crew, and a good one, too; for everyone knew that his men were well fed, well cared for, and, if they deserved it, well treated. But, all the same, from cabin-boy up to cook, nay, up to first mate, all were liable to feel, at some time or other during the voyage, the wind of the captain's fist or the lash of his tongue.

That he loved his grog and his pipe goes without saying, for he was a thorough jack-tar, even in his vices; nor did he expect others, landsmen or sailors, to be any better than himself. In fact, he had the broadest toleration for everything except incompetence, duplicity, and meanness,—these failings he would not put up with from anyone, and hence many of his wildest explosions.

In spite of the inevitable "damages" that strewed his path, like that of a cyclone, Antle was so valuable a man that his employers never found themselves in a position to dispense with his services. Two things, to be sure, they would have

liked ; namely, to procure another master equally as capable, or to have had Antle made over, with his bad temper omitted from the composition. As neither of these events seemed within the limits of probability, they had to endure the necessary evil as patiently as possible.

The present scribe was one of the younger book-keepers of the firm for which Antle sailed, and though brought in contact with him more frequently, perhaps, than any other of the men in the establishment, yet, strange to say, the captain always treated me kindly, notwithstanding the fact that we often had to adjust differences and untie knots which would be trying to even much less excitable tempers. But whether it was my simple tactics or his greater consideration for a youngster who was so evidently doing his best to serve him, I know not ; at all events, Antle and I were always on the best of terms, and never did he return from a trip without remembering me in the shape of some curious or useful nick-nack. In his rough, leonine way, I believe he had quite a paternal affection for me, and was certainly more confidential as to his personal history and experience than to any other man living.

One day early in the winter, just as the "Saucy Lass" was about to throw her parting kiss at the port, the captain fell on the icy sidewalk and broke his leg. Of course, another master had to take his place ; and so, for the first time in years, the "Saucy Lass" sailed without Antle's burly form on the quarter-deck.

In fact, he never again occupied that proud position, for

the simple reason that never again did the "Saucy Lass" enter the port. She was never seen or heard of from that day, and was supposed to have foundered or come in contact with one of the huge icebergs which, that season, happened to be unusually abundant in the track of navigation.

I was one of the first of our men to visit the poor fellow after his mishap, when I found him comfortably cared for at his lodgings; for, as I have already intimated, the captain was a bachelor, and with no relative this side the Atlantic.

To say that he chafed like a caged lion at his enforced confinement was only what might have been expected from a man of his temperament and occupation. Indeed, I was not a little surprised to find him bearing up as patiently as he did, under the circumstances. It seemed as though he had exhausted his vocabulary and hadn't another expletive to fling at fate, or the calamity was so great that ordinary imprecations could not possibly do justice to it. At any rate, I was glad to find the terrible old salt so comparatively tranquil, and promised to come as often as I could spare the time, and do my best to relieve the tedium of his long hours and weary vigils.

But I reckoned without my host; for, in a few days after that, I was laid up myself. The captain's physician, Dr. Molloy, who was also mine for the occasion—a skilful enough practitioner when not too much under the influence of drink—informed me, to my great satisfaction, that I was threatened with pneumonia, and recommended me to "pack off home to my mother as fast as my legs could carry me."

My home was in a suburban town, a few miles from the port; and so, bidding the captain a hasty good-bye, I covered the distance as speedily as possible.

I was a remarkably nervous youth, and, supposing every sickness to be my last, I never expected to see my old friend, the captain, again in the flesh. I would like to have taken him with me to my pleasant home, where the kindest of mothers would soon have nursed the pair of us back to health, as she did me in rather less than eight weeks, though assured by our family physician that I had a "tight squeak" for my life, and that I should have to take good care of myself in future.

And so, once more, I set my face in the direction of the port, rejoicing in my new lease of life and eager to rejoin my old companions, who, indeed, had not forgotten me during my illness, but kept me fairly posted in all the more important occurrences of the day.

But the most astounding piece of intelligence was to be communicated to me by the doctor, whom I met half-way on my journey. Almost my first question was in reference to Captain Antle, from whom the only thing I had heard was that he was "getting along finely."

"I'm sorry to have to tell you," said Molloy, "that poor Antle has gone crazy."

"What! You're surely joking!"

"I wish to heaven I was! I always liked the poor fellow, and many's the good glass of grog and cigar we've had together; but now he won't touch either—not a sniff nor a whiff."

"How long has he been this way?" I inquired.

"Oh, about five weeks, I guess. It came on suddenly, like a fit of apoplexy."

"Why, this is perfectly awful!" I exclaimed.

"It is, indeed, — a sad affair! He's got a notion that his broken leg was a judgment on him for his sins, and all he does now is to read the Bible and say his prayers. He's not like the same man. Not a bit. Go and see him as soon as you can. He's always inquiring after you, and perhaps you may do him some good. If I wasn't in such a tremendous hurry, I'd tell you more about it. See him as soon as you can. Good-bye! Get up, Bess!" And Molloy was off as fast as his nag could trot, leaving me to plod forward on foot in sorrow and amazement.

"Poor Antle!" I soliloquized; "this, no doubt, is the direful penalty of an ungoverned temper. The short madness of anger has become the life-long madness of monomania."

As I hurried over the familiar road, revolving in my mind the captain's latest and most terrible calamity, it occurred to me that Molloy, being a Roman Catholic (and a poor one, at that), was hardly the man to diagnosticate this particular case; for it seemed to me to resemble what Evangelical Christians termed "conversion." If the captain did nothing worse than read the Bible and pray, may not this be that very change of heart the Methodists make so much of in their lively prayer-meetings, but of which I, at that time, knew little, and Molloy, less?

It was a matter I was most impatient to investigate.

II.

BEFORE going near the office, I hastened to the captain's boarding-house. I was still doubtful as to the reliability of Molloy's information, and inquired of two or three acquaintances I met on the way, if they had heard anything of Captain Antle lately. One shook his head ominously, and another smiled; but each advised me to go and see for myself. The consequence was that by the time I reached the house, my curiosity was wound up to the highest pitch of excitement.

His landlady, Mrs. Williams, opened the door, and, in answer to my inquiry, told me that the captain was nearly well; so that, she thought, he would be able to walk out in the course of a few days.

"And — isn't he —" I was about to say crazy, but touched my forehead, instead.

The woman smiled, and lowering her voice almost to a whisper, replied, "Well, sir, he's certainly very different from what he was; but I guess he's all right in his head. I know the doctor thinks the captain's a little queer; but my opinion is, he's only got religion — that's all."

This being just what I surmised, I delayed no longer, but went up at once to the captain's chamber, and finding the door partially open, stepped in without the formality of knocking. The captain, ensconced in a capacious easy-

chair, with his injured limb on a rest, was attentively reading a quarto Bible which, with a hymn-book and a well-thumbed copy of "Pilgrim's Progress," lay on a small table at his elbow.

So absorbed was he with his reading, that, for a second or two, he appeared not to notice my entrance; then, looking up suddenly and seeing who was standing by him, he grasped my arm, pulled me towards him, and gave me a resounding kiss on the forehead.

For a moment we gazed silently into each other's face; then, seizing my hand and holding me at arm's length, the captain said, "Charles, do you know me?"

"Know you, captain," I replied. "Of course I do. Why shouldn't I?"

"Because, Charles, I am not the same man I was two months ago."

"Not the same?"

"No! Bless the Lord, I'm another person altogether! Not the old Antle, child of the devil; but the new Antle, of the Lord Jesus. Charles, I am glad — glad to see you — glad to be able to tell you that the old things have passed away, and all things have become new. You see me a brand plucked from the burning — a sinner saved by grace — saved through the blood of Jesus. Yes, my dear brother. And a happier soul lives not this side the pearly gates!"

All this time he kept firm hold of my hand, and gazed with an expression of intense delight up into my face.

When released from his grasp, I drew along a chair and seated myself in front of him.

That a marvelous change had been wrought in my old friend, was apparent at a glance. It was, indeed, almost a transfiguration, so radiant was his visage and so spiritual his utterance.

How, in so brief a time, the captain could have acquired such familiarity with the Scriptures, was amazing; and certainly, if the assurance of salvation is not all a delusion, he was perfectly rational as well as supremely happy.

Now that I was fully satisfied as to his sanity, I said, "Captain, I met Molloy on the way down, and he told me that you had gone crazy."

"Ah, yes! Poor Molloy! No doubt he thinks so; but I wish he and everyone else were as crazy as I am. No, Charles, I have been crazy all my life; it's only now that I'm coming to my senses. No, I won't say I was crazy. A crazy man is innocent. He does know what he is doing or saying, and is not responsible. It was not so with me. I was a vile and wicked sinner, and I knew it, and gloried in it. I've done more harm than a legion of crazy men. I've done harm to the souls of men, and that's worse ten thousand times than harming their bodies. But, by the help of my Heavenly Father, I shall try to spend the balance of my days in making what amends I can for the evils I have done, and for the wicked sinner I have been. No more sea for me, Charles. Henceforth my business will be to tell men what the good Lord has done for me and what He can do for them. I have little education and know nothing about theology, but I do know that the Lord has washed me clean with His most

precious blood. I do know that sin has no more power over me, and that I am a free and happy soul.

"Oh, it's a wonderful, wonderful Providence! What I considered the greatest misfortune, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. I lost my voyage, but I found my Saviour! I see it all now as plain as the sun at noon-day. No, I was not to go that trip. The wind had been in our teeth five days. The first day it veered round so that we could weigh anchor, I fell and broke my leg. Well, another man takes my place and I'm laid up for repairs.

"Charles, you know how I take such things, or rather, how I used to take them. You know—everyone knows—what a poor, miserable, profane wretch I was. I let out on everything in heaven above and the earth beneath. I cursed the ice, and the winds, and the streets, and everything and everybody, until God sent his angel to me in the shape of an old woman! Yes, Charles, a most wonderful old lady as ever I saw—bless her heart and soul!—for under God, she has made a new man of me! She is my second mother—my spiritual mother. She was a messenger from the Lord to call the greatest sinner that ever lived to repentance."

"But, captain," I interrupted, "surely you do yourself a great injustice. You were very far from being the greatest sinner that ever lived. What harm—"

"Charles! Charles!" the captain exclaimed, grabbing my knee and looking almost wildly into my face. "If you have any regard for me, don't say anything like that. If you value my friendship, don't make any kind of excuses for me. I

was the chief of sinners ; but the Lord has had compassion on me — even me, and has saved me and washed me cleaner than any new-born babe — bless and praise His holy name ! Yes, washed all my sins away in His most precious blood ! ”

I knew very little concerning what is termed “experimental religion,” in those days. I was a studious young man, of correct habits and quiet literary tastes, a communicant of the Episcopal Church, and inclined to regard such expressions and manifestations in the light of fanaticism, or religious frenzy. Of course, in common with the rest, I confessed myself to being a “miserable sinner,” but understood the phrase in a strictly ritualistic sense, and scarcely as a matter of fact. Here, however, was an experience altogether new to me. Here was a man who actually believed himself to be a sinner, a vile sinner, such a sinner as I had in mind as the ideal “miserable sinner” — here was a man rejoicing in the consciousness of redemption and absolute forgiveness, thus removing the idea from the abstract to the concrete, and lending the whole subject a nearness and personality it never before assumed to my mind.

Hitherto, I had sat, if not quite with the scorers, certainly among those who regarded Methodists and other sectarians with a kind of humorous contempt, attributing their peculiar notions of religion, — when they honestly believed in them, — to a lack of culture, if not, indeed, of intellect. But here was something so far removed from the contemptible as to be almost sublime in its expression. Here was a change in one I well knew — a change of the most absolute

and radical character. Here was a man transformed, as it were, before my very eyes, — the Antle of two months ago being as different from the Antle now sitting before me as any two individuals could possibly be. It was not that he had “turned over a new leaf,” “sworn off,” “made a resolution to be a better man,” or any of those weak and ineffectual half-measures we hear about and smile at; no, Captain Antle was a *new man*, — renewed to the smallest fibre of his being, to the most secret recesses of his soul. Of this astounding change you could have no manner of doubt; neither could anyone doubt that, as he claimed, this change was attributable to some very extraordinary, if not, indeed, supernatural agency — in short, to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Desiring to investigate more thoroughly this extremely interesting psychological phenomenon (as I then regarded it), I resolved to question the captain closely as to the steps which led to his wonderful conversion. Never before did such an opportunity present itself to me. If I had had the privilege of an interview with some celestial visitant, I could scarcely have anticipated a more marvelous revelation.

Many a time, in days gone by — how far off they now seemed! — I had listened spell-bound to the captain's narrations of peril and adventure on the mighty deep, listened to his experiences in foreign lands, and among strange peoples; but now I was to give ear to a revelation from his lips as different from all these “yarns,” as day is from night, as far above the scenes described in them as heaven is above earth. I was standing, as it seemed to me, on holy ground. I was

in a room, made sacred, like that "upper room," by the descent of the Holy Spirit. I was to hear from another world than ours — from a higher plane than this mundane sphere !

Few, then, can conceive of my feelings, when, in response to my earnest request for fuller information as to this most amazing of all the captain's experiences, he promptly replied :

" Gladly, my dear Charles ; and may the good Lord bless you in the hearing of it ! "

III.

"WELL, Charles, you know all about how I came to break my leg," said the captain. "It was just as I turned the corner of the street, near Molloy's house, on my way to the wharf. We intended to sail that evening, the wind being in the right quarter, after waiting four days. I slipped on a bit of ice not bigger than my hand. A couple of men helped me into the doctor's. He wasn't in, and they talked of taking me to old Hewitt's, the bone-setter; but, in a few minutes Molloy came, smelling of rum and tobacco. He had wits enough to fix me up with splints and bandages, so I could be removed here to my lodgings. They carried me on a stretcher, with a procession of boys following us, and sent for a nurse to take care of me.

"A nurse, do I say? God bless her, she's an angel, if ever there was one! Her name is Taylor—the widow Taylor—old Billy Taylor's wife—a blessed old lady, and a most efficient nurse, too.

"Well, Charles, first along I didn't pay much attention to her or anyone else. All I did was growl and swear, and bemoan my ill luck at losing my voyage, and having to lay up for weeks and perhaps months.

"Of course, I couldn't help noticing how lively and hopeful old lady Taylor was all the time, singing and warbling to herself like an old bird, and she so near the end of her days,

too, with all her family under ground long ago, and not much to live for, anyway. So I said to her one day, 'Mother,' I said, 'what makes you so plaguy happy all the time?' (I call her mother because she reminds me of what I recollect of my own mother, and then, being an old woman, why, of course, it was all right to call her so; but I little thought then she was going to be my second mother, my mother in Israel.) 'Mother,' I said, 'what makes you so plaguy happy?'

" 'The love of the Lord Jesus,' she replies, quite prompt.

" 'What do you mean by that?' I asked her.

" 'I mean that the Lord has washed away all my sins and accepted me as His child. Being His child, I am happy, because I am safe in His arms, and I love Him with all my heart and soul, and love all His creatures, and want to bring them all to Christ.'

" Well, this seemed such a pack of nonsense to me that I couldn't help laughing at her, especially to hear her talk about her sins; so I said, 'Mother, what sins did you ever commit that hurt yourself or anyone else?'

" 'Everyone out of Christ is a sinner, my child,' she replied.

" 'Out of Christ? What do you mean by being out of Christ?' I asked.

" 'All unbelievers in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour are out of Christ, and therefore are in their sins.'

" 'But, mother, if you were a sinner, what must I be?' I said.

“‘No worse in the sight of God than I was,’ she replies.

“‘No worse — what nonsense! Why, mother, there’s scarce a sin you can think of that I haven’t committed; and you talk about my being no worse than you.’

“‘Yes; but you’re sorry for what you have done, are you not?’

“‘Sorry? Well, I’m rather ashamed of it, I must own.’

“‘Yes, but aren’t you sorry — real sorry? Shouldn’t you rather you had never done and said such wicked things? Come, now!’

“‘Why, of course, mother,’ I said. ‘I’d like to look people in the face and feel I was as good as any of ’em.’

“‘Yes; but shouldn’t you like to look God in the face and know that all your sins are forgiven, and that He accepts you as His child?’

“‘I say, mother, that’s all nonsense! Just think of me. Consider what a life I’ve led from my boyhood. I never had any kind of bringing up since my poor mother died, when I wasn’t much more than a baby, as I may say. Turned adrift on the world to shift for myself as best I could, I’ve had all sorts of treatment, been among all sorts of people, but good people; been knocked about all over the world, cuffed and kicked and cursed, till I was big enough to do the same things myself to others. Here I am, over forty years of age, a sailor for twenty-five years or more, a master-mariner ten years, and now laid up with a broken leg. You talk about your being a sinner — a woman anchored here in port all your born days, away from temptation and danger — what

do you know about sin? Why, mother, I confess to you, that with the exception of Mrs. Williams, you're the first good, pure woman I've talked with for years and years. Such women as you are not the kind of ones sailors fall in with. No, indeed !'

" ' My child,' she said, ' remember what I say. All of us are sinners out of Christ, and one is no worse than another ; but the vilest sinner that ever lived is none too vile for God to love and forgive, if he only repent and ask forgiveness through Christ, the Redeemer. Remember Mary Magdalen, out of whom no less than seven devils were cast, how she was forgiven all her sins ; and also the Prodigal Son, how his father forgave him when he came home hungry and repentant, with scarcely a rag to his back.'

" Well, Charles, at that time I didn't know anything about the Prodigal Son or Mary Magdalen, and so I asked the old lady to tell me all about these people. So she took a little Testament out of her bag, and put on her spectacles.

" Oh, mother !' I said, ' don't you go to reading. I'd rather you'd tell me the stories in your own words.'

" So she told me about the Prodigal Son, and it seemed to suit my case so exactly that I then asked her to read all the particulars out of the book, if she had a mind to ; and when she did so, I was surprised to find that it was only a short story after all — it seemed to be so full of meaning. I asked her if she was sure there was no more of it in any part of the Bible ; but she said no, that was all, but it was enough to show that our Heavenly Father is ready at all times to

come and meet the repentant sinner and forgive him all his offences, and take him to His heart; 'For,' she said, 'if an earthly parent, like the father of the Prodigal, will do so, how much more our Father who is in heaven?'

"Well, now, Charles, do you know, this struck me as being a mighty clever argument! If the Prodigal's father forgave him when the poor lad came home so humble and repentant, how much more the Heavenly Father, who made us and knows better than anyone else whether we are sorry or only shamming! This cheered me up for a bit till I began to think over my past life, and what a man I had been, and I said, 'Why, mother, look here; there's no manner of comparison between the Prodigal and me. He had his one big spree and got to the end of his chink in a few weeks, and of course he soon saw what a fool he had made of himself, and was glad to go sneaking home again. He knew well enough the old man would be on the lookout for him. But think of me, mother! Think what I've been for twenty-five or thirty years. Why, the Heavenly Father has given me up long and long ago, and forgot all about me.'

"'If He had given you up, my child,' she said, 'He wouldn't have broken your leg.'

"'Wouldn't have broken my leg!' I said. 'Why, what do you mean, mother?'

"'Why, so that you have had to stay at home and be given an opportunity to reflect on your past life; that you might be sorry for your sins, and ask your Heavenly Father's forgiveness. That's what I mean by His breaking your leg.'

God permitted that little bit of ice to remain unmelted on the corner of the street. Nothing but a broken leg would have kept you from going to sea, and then you would never have seen your old nurse, and we should never have had this talk, should we?’

“‘Well, that’s very true, mother,’ I said. ‘It’s worth breaking both one’s legs to meet such a woman as you; for, without meaning any flattery, mother, you’re the most remarkable woman I ever heard of.’ And, Charles, that’s true; for I don’t believe there’s another such woman in the world.

“‘Oh, as for me, my child, that’s neither here nor there; but if you only find your blessed Saviour—that, *that*, is everything!’ said the old lady, wiping the tears from her eyes and praying to the Heavenly Father for help and light.

“I never felt so strange in all my life, Charles. For a few minutes I felt like howling out to her to begone from me, and let me go to the devil, as I deserved; but I kept my mouth shut as tight as I could till the fit passed off and I felt more cool and collected, she praying all the while. Then I said, ‘Mother, you don’t suppose that the Heavenly Father would forgive *me*—such a tough old salt as I am, do you?’

“‘You?’ she replied. ‘Why, you’re just the kind of person Christ Jesus delights to save. It was to save sinners Christ came into the world. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. When you lose a man overboard, you don’t trouble about those on deck, but about the one in the water.’

“‘That’s very true, mother,’ I said; ‘for I’ve seen that thing happen many a time.’

“‘Yes? and what do you do in such cases — when a man is overboard?’

“‘Well, it depends on how we are. Sometimes we lower a boat and try to pick the man up; sometimes we throw out a life-line; sometimes one of us jumps over and rescues his man. I’ve done that once or twice, myself,’ I said.

“‘That’s just it, my child. Your soul is now struggling in the ocean of sin and iniquity, and your Heavenly Father is not only throwing life-lines to you, but his only Son, the Lord Jesus, is striving to rescue you. Here are some of the life-lines in this Holy Book.’

“Saying which, she opened her Testament and read about the Pharisee and the Publican, about the lost sheep, about the thief on the cross, and ever so much more, showing the love of the Heavenly Father; and it astonished me so much that I had to interrupt her. ‘Why, mother,’ I said, ‘I never knew there was so much about love, and pity, and forgiveness, and all that, in the Bible. I thought it was all hell-fire and damnation, especially for such fellows as me. Whenever I ventured into a church, which was very seldom, the people eyed me as if I was a pick-pocket, and turned up their noses at me; and the parson, he seemed to point me out as the one hopeless case, and the things he’d read out of his books hit me square between the eyes, so that I was glad to pop out and forget all about it. But as for you, mother, you seem to find a different kind of talk altogether in the Book, and such as gives a man like me some chance — some hopes.’

“‘God is love,’ she said. ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (that means you and me) believeth in Him should have everlasting life. God is ready to forgive your sins whenever you ask him.’

“‘But, mother,’ I said, ‘look here; what right have I to ask God to forgive my sins? What have I ever done for Him but drag His name in the dirt, all my life?’

“‘You can do nothing to merit salvation. The most holy saint that ever lived can do nothing. Salvation is a free gift — the unmerited gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And as to your right, you have the same right the Prodigal had — the right of being His son. Our Lord spake that parable for the sake of just such poor discouraged penitents as you, my child. He spake it to assure them that their Heavenly Father is willing to forgive and accept them whenever they come to Him — whenever they ask in humility and in faith, nothing doubting. Ask, as you ask anyone for whatever you stand in need of — just as you ask me for a glass of water. You believe that I both can and will bring you the drink; so believe that your Heavenly Father can and will grant you forgiveness, through the blood of the Redeemer. There was never a better time to ask Him than now. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. God is waiting to be gracious. Oh, grieve not his Holy Spirit, or He may never visit you again!’

“Just then, Charles, a great lump came in my throat almost as big as my fist, and I cried out, ‘Oh, mother, I be-

lieve I am choking! I believe my heart or something is rising up into my mouth!'

"She laid her hand on my shoulder and said, 'My child, this is that old serpent, the devil, trying to keep you from coming to your Heavenly Father. Shall you allow Satan to rob you of your birthright?'

"'Not if I die for it!' I cried. 'No! not if I die for it! He had me long enough in his clutches, damn him! — Oh, mother! I beg your pardon. I'm sorry I said that bad word, but it slipped out unawares. You'll forgive me, won't you?'

"'God alone can forgive us our bad words and wicked actions, my child,' she said kindly. 'You must ask Him to forgive you, and He will, freely.'

"'I do so hate the devil, mother! If I could only give the old rascal a good pounding, it seems to me I'd be happy,' I said, clenching my fists.

"'Resist him, my child. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. He's the biggest coward in the universe—is Satan. A mean, sly, sneaking coward. Seek strength of your Heavenly Father, and you'll have no more trouble with the enemy of souls; and it is he who is standing now between you and your Heavenly Father.'

"Oh, Charles, how I struggled and strived! I thought I'd surely die in my chair. I never felt so before. I could scarcely breathe. I wanted to ask God to forgive my sins, and I couldn't—no, I couldn't ask Him, to save my life. I grabbed the old lady by both hands and groaned, and groaned, and finally, I burst out a-crying like a child. Yes,

Charles, I cried for the first time since I was a boy. 'My God, forgive me! My God, forgive me!' I kept on sobbing. 'My God, have mercy on me and forgive me!' And at last the lump went down in my throat and I seemed to hear a chime of bells and a voice, saying, 'This my son was lost and is found, was dead and is alive again.' Then everything went whirling and whizzing about me, and I seemed to be fastened down to my chair, and fiery wheels came rolling towards me, growing larger and moving faster as they advanced. I tried to dodge them, but couldn't stir hand or foot. At last the fire rolled all over me; but instead of burning me up, as I expected, it seemed soft, sweet, and cool, like a gentle breath of air. Then I saw a dark form standing before me waving its arms like wings, and I cried, 'Who is that?'

"'No one but your old nurse,' she answered;—for she it was; but her voice sounded strange and a long way off. 'You've had a little turn, that's all,' she said.

"'But where were you all the while?' I asked; for I'd completely lost my reckoning.

"'Right here, my child, where I am now. Didn't you see me?'

"'No, not till now,' I said. 'How long have you been there?'

"'Oh, perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour. I haven't stirred from this,' she answered.

"'Then, as sure as you live, I'm befogged,' I said. 'For it seemed as if I'd been fastened down—strapped to this

chair for a week, with blazing wheels whirling all around me, until someone said, "This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found," or something like that.'

"That was your Heavenly Father's way of telling you that your sins have been forgiven. He brought to your mind what the father of the Prodigal said to him when he forgave him and took him home again.'

"For a minute or more, Charles, it seemed as if my heart had stopped beating.

"What!' I cried, 'and can it be possible, mother, that God has forgiven my sins!'

"If you feel in your heart such a love for God that you can truly call him Father, then your sins have been forgiven,' she said.

"Mother, look here!' I cried, 'I'm ready to do anything God wants me to do. Lamé as I am, I'd crawl all around the world on my hands and knees to tell of God's goodness and mercy. Oh, mother, how can I thank my Redeemer! I would gladly die right here and now, so as to be able to go and thank Him!'

"My child,' she replied, 'you can thank Him without dying. You can thank Him by a life of service. You can thank Him by helping to bring others to a knowledge of salvation. Live for Christ. Live for Him who hath redeemed you and bought you with his own precious blood.'

"My sins forgiven! I a free man! Why, mother, if I had a thousand lives to give, they would be all too few! Christ has done too much for me! It doesn't seem the fair

thing. It seems, by rights, as if I had ought to suffer at least a few thousand years in purgatory, or somewhere. Is there a purgatory, mother?’

“‘There is no need of such a place, my child. The blood of Christ has washed away all your guilty stains. He is your all-sufficient sacrifice. You are now the child of God and joint heir with Jesus. There is, therefore, now no condemnation for you. You are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.’

“‘Oh, mother! mother! to forgive a whole life of sinning just for the asking, seems too much — too much! To give Him only the few remaining years of my miserable life is nothing — nothing!’

“‘You will have all eternity in which to serve and thank Him. Think of that! All eternity!’

“‘Ah, yes! yes! All eternity! That’s good! That’s a blessed thought, mother. All eternity! All eternity! and it begins to-day and never ends — never, never ends! And yet it is none too long — none too long! No, not all eternity! Forever and forever, in glory everlasting. Amen!’

“There, my dear Charles,” said the captain, wiping the glad, bright tears from his eyes, “that was five weeks ago yesterday, at two o’clock in the afternoon. Every day since, we’ve been having the most blessed seasons in this room, and I am the happiest man in the wide world — ay, the happiest creature in all God’s universe! And what is very singular, Charles, it seems as if my past life was an immense way back and in some other world altogether. That is something I can’t account for.

"But once, since that blessed day, the old devil came and whispered in my ear, 'Antle, you're a fool. You are just the same as you ever were. There is no Christ.' And I flung back in his cursed teeth, 'You lie, you old viper! Begone from me, you father of lies! I know that my Redeemer liveth!' And the tempter left me.

"Oh, yes, yes! I suppose some people think I'm crazy; but you know better, my dear friend. You're a churchman, a student of the Bible, a scholar. You know that this blessed change of heart I've experienced is the new birth — the change from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, our Heavenly Father."

Most humbly I confess, that, in spite of the mental and moral qualifications for which the captain gave me credit, his insight into the "plan of salvation" — his understanding of divine truth — his spirituality — was far beyond any experience or conception of mine. Indeed, he seemed like one inspired. I doubt if Ezekiel or John could have exhibited more striking evidences of an indwelling Spirit. I was awed in his presence, as I should certainly be in the presence of either of the above-named prophets. There was that same simple, but sublime faith which must have inspired the early saints and martyrs. And yet, he seemed like a child — confidingly, lovingly reaching up his hand to be led of his Heavenly Father.

When the captain concluded his remarkable narrative, I could say nothing; I was mute. To congratulate him would seem an impertinence, if not, indeed, a profanation. I never

found myself so peculiarly placed. It seemed as if I saw before me the very incarnation of the Christian Religion — Christianity, not as a code of rules or commandments, not as thirty-nine articles, a confession of faith, a cult, a ritual, an abstract principle — but as a living embodiment, a flesh-and-blood reality.

There can be no doubt that Captain Antle's conversion was one of the most remarkable in the whole annals of experimental religion, and as to its genuineness, his subsequent career, which I shall endeavor to sketch in the following pages, is the best proof and confirmation.

IV.

GEORGE ANTLE was born in a little village near Bristol, England. His father was a rough, hard-working, beer-drinking blacksmith, to whose sole care, the boy (when about twelve years of age) was left, with his two little sisters, by the death of their mother.

In this helpless condition, Mr. Antle secured, as soon as possible, the services of a housekeeper, who appears to have been a somewhat coarse person, more practical than conciliating. As George used to say, when referring to this period of his life, "She came to the house with a big red shawl on, like a Union Jack, and I've hated red shawls ever since." The boy conceived a strong dislike for this woman the moment he saw her, and that she was not slow in reciprocating his feelings, soon became evident by the troubles that arose between them.

George had been attending school for five years, and, in the elementary branches of education, was considered a fairly good scholar; but, it cannot be denied that, after school-hours, the lively boy was more inclined for play than assisting the housekeeper in the domestic duties she herself was hired to discharge, "hence those tears." So matters went for a year or more, growing from bad to worse, when this very objectionable woman—to the boy, at least—became George's step-mother, and then his troubles increased four-

fold. She never attempted to punish him herself, as it might not have been prudent for her to do so; but almost every day she brought some fresh complaint against him to his father, whose readiest method of settling the account with the boy was to flog him.

So the battle raged for nearly a year longer, when one day the crisis was reached. But I shall allow the captain to tell this sad story of his childhood in his own graphic way. It will show that, in certain traits of character and disposition, the child was father of the man.

* * *

"I had been having difficulty with my step-mother several days running," said the captain; "and so, one morning, father says to me, 'Geordie, I want to talk with 'ee, lad. Don't 'ee go to school to-day, but come along with me to the smithy.'

"His manner seemed to be different from usual. There was more gentleness in the tone of his voice, and I wondered what was coming. It couldn't be a thrashing, because he seldom said much when he laid the strap on my back; so I followed him over to the smithy, and as I happened to glance round when quitting the cottage, I saw my step-mother standing in the door-way wiping her eyes with her apron. Big as she was, she was a great hand at snivelling, so I didn't pay much heed to that manœuvre.

"Well, father didn't say anything till we reached the smithy. There were two horses waiting to be shod, and, consequently, he hadn't much time for words, nor was he a

man of many words when he did have the time. So he led me over to one corner and, taking me by the lappel of the jacket, looked into my face with an expression I never saw in his before. It was not anger this time, but sorrow, deep sorrow, and says he, 'Geordie, my lad, I must have peace and quiet in my house. I must have it, not only for my own sake, but for the sake of your poor little motherless sisters. It was for them and for you I got the good woman to come and look after us all, Geordie. (Father used to call his wife the good woman; but for my part, I couldn't see any goodness in her, though perhaps that was more my fault than hers.) And she's a-doing of it well, my lad, and making things comfortable, and is careful and good to the little 'uns. Leastways, 'twas the best we could do when your poor mother left us for a better world. I'm not sorry for what I done. On the contrary, I reckon I've done well by you all. But, Geordie, it's plain that you and she don't hitch horses, and as I must have peace and quiet under my roof-tree, the only way I see out of it, lad, is for thee to leave us. You'd be quitting, anyway, in a few years, at most. You may 's well go now, while your shoes are good, as to wait till they 're wore out. I did hope to see you started in life hereabouts; but that can't be, as it seems. So now, my advice to you is to go to Bristol and busk round like a little man, and someone will give 'ee employ, I have no doubt. You can never learn to swim till you get into the water. And this much I will say o' thee, lad, you're a likely boy, and a stout 'un, and have had good schooling, and so ought to make your way,

if you take good care o' yourself, and be brave and honest, and tell the truth. So now I'll give thee a golden guinea, and you may make up your bundle and quit to-day, and may God bless thee, my lad !'

"Here I burst out a-crying, and father, he, too, had a tear in his eye, and couldn't say another word for a minute or two; then he gave me a hug and said, 'Now, good-bye, and take care o' thyself and thee'll be all right.'

"Well, I didn't know whether to be sorry or glad at first. I felt very queer; but I wiped my eyes and went back to the house for my bundle.

"'Twas a lovely May morning, and the birdies were a-warbling, the flowers a-blooming, and the trees all in blossom; and never do I smell apple-blossoms to this day, but the same feelings come over me I felt that morning.

"Our house was one of those pretty thatched cottages, all covered with roses, you find nowhere else save in old England, and I thought it never looked so nice as it did that day. But I had to leave it all now.

"Well, it didn't take me long to make up my best clothes, and a few other things, and then I went out into the back garden to find my sisters and bid them good-bye. They were gathering cowslips, and made me stick a posy in my button-hole, poor little maids, and asked me to bring them something when I came home.

"My step-mother was standing in the door-way with a parcel in her hands; but I said nothing to her till she called to me, 'Geordie, aren't you going to bid me good-bye?'

"Well, I halted a bit and tried to swallow the lump in my throat. Then she came to me and said, 'Here's some cakes and cheese; you may be hungry before you reach the end of your journey.' She then stooped down and kissed me on the cheek, and hoped I'd be a good boy and take care of myself.

"If she had only acted this way with me all along, maybe I shouldn't have been turned adrift on the world as I was. But, no doubt, it was all for the best in the long run. At all events I bade her good-bye, and never set eyes on one of them again.

"Years after I went back to see my old home; but father and his wife were dead. My sisters had grown up, married, and gone to Australia or some distant parts, no one could tell where. The old cottage looked so small that I wondered how we could have all managed to live in it, and those who occupied it didn't know me from Adam. I walked over to the old smithy, and a stranger was hammering horse-shoes on father's anvil; but he didn't know what ever became of George Antle's young scapegrace. It made me sick to linger about the village any longer, so I went away; and that's the last time I ever put foot in it, or want to, again.

"But I'm ahead of my story. Well, after bidding good-bye to my step-mother, I started off down the turnpike to Bristol, without ever once looking behind. Long before I came in sight of the town, I began to feel hungry, and finding myself near a babbling brook, I sat down on the bank and

made a hearty lunch on my cakes and cheese. What was left I wrapped up for another meal; but just as I had done so, a tramp-tinker happened along with his kit of tools on his back. He stopped and asked me where I was a-going, and when I told him to Bristol, he said, 'Why, so be I, least-ways, if I don't famish afore I gets there.'

"'No, you needn't do that,' I said; 'for I've got some cakes and cheese here I'll give you.'

"So I opened the parcel and gave him all of it. The man sat down by my side and devoured the food like a hungry dog.

"'I s'pose yer mother made these things?' he said, cramming half a cake into his mouth at a time.

"'She did,' I replied.

"'She knows how to make cake, now I tell ye, she does. 'Tis the best cake I ever ate,' he said, swallowing the last mouthful and carefully shaking all the crumbs into the hollow of his hand and tossing them after it. Then, taking a drink from the sparkling brook, and lighting his pipe, he looked as happy as if dining with the Lord Mayor himself.

"'Now, young gentleman,' he said, 'if you be not ashamed o' thy company, we can cover the rest o' the road in less than an hour.'

"This was the first time in my life I was ever called a young gentleman, and it made me feel not a little proud, even if he was only a tinker. So we took up our burdens — he his kit and I my bundle — and off we tramped, reaching the town about the time he said.

"He asked me all kinds of questions about myself and my relations, and when we got into town, wanted to know where I was going to stop. I told him I didn't know.

"'Oh!' said he, 'if that be so, you had better come with me to the Bull Tavern, and you'll be well treated.'

"So after wandering through a tangle of streets that seemed to me very narrow, dark, and dirty, we came to a tavern, and he said, 'Now, we be as good as at home.' He set down his kit and told me I'd better give my bundle to the good lady behind the bar, and she would keep it for me till I wanted it.

"Well, as it was a couple of hours before dinner-time I went out to stroll about the town, and soon found myself down by the docks. It was the first time I'd ever set eyes on ships, and they filled me with astonishment. I must have spent a good two hours gazing at them, till the smell of cooking from their galleys made me think it was about dinner time, so I hurried back to the tavern as fast as I could; but I was so long a-finding the place, that the dinner-hour was passed before I got there. However, I sat down at a table and asked the waiter-man to give me some dinner.

"'What would you like, sir?' he asked very respectfully, it being the first time I was ever sir'd.

"'I don't care so it's dinner,' I said; for all I knew was that dinner was dinner.

"The man smiled, and soon brought me some beef, vegetables, pudding, bread, cheese, and small beer. As I was hungry, I wasn't long clearing the platters, and when the

man politely informed me the cost was a shilling, I put my hand in my pocket, and, to his astonishment, laid a guinea on the table. A man who was sitting opposite me, when he saw the glittering gold, cried, 'Hold on! I'll pay for the boy;' and so handed the waiter a shilling.

"Then the man came and sat down by me, and whispered, 'Boy, you stole that guinea.'

"'You lie,' I replied, 'I never stole a thing in my life.'

"'Well, then, how did you come by it?'

"'My father gave it me,' I said.

"'Your father! Then he must be a fool, that's all I can say.'

"'You lie again,' I said. 'My father's no fool, and he could thrash you with one hand.'

"'That may be, lad; but no sensible man would give a boy a guinea to carry about in his pocket. Don't you know there's plenty of chaps round here that would pick you of that coin in a twinkling? The best thing you can do, if you want your money to be safe, is to let me keep it for you, now your dinner's paid for. I'm your Uncle Jacob, remember.'

"Well, I was simple and confiding enough to let the fellow have my guinea, and he said, 'Now, my little man, your money is safe and when you want any change come to your uncle, and that's me.'

"To make a long story short, that was the last I ever saw of either man or money; for he soon walked out and I never met him again.

"Well, I wandered round the streets in search of something to do; but as nobody seemed to need me, I came back to the inn very tired and hungry. I expected to see my Uncle Jacob, but he was nowhere about. I asked the waiter if he had seen him; but no, he hadn't and even didn't know the man. I said that I wanted my supper and a bed.

" 'All right, sir,' replied the waiter, 'you may have both, and your breakfast to-morrow, besides.'

"So I ate a hearty supper and went to bed, and soon forgot all my troubles till breakfast-time next day. After that meal, I asked the waiter what I owed. He told me, 'Three shillings, if you please, sir.'

" 'I can't pay you,' I said, 'till Uncle Jacob comes home; he's taking care of my money.'

" 'What!' cried the waiter, 'you didn't give that chap your guinea, did you?'

" 'I did,' I answered; 'for he said he'd keep it safe, and let me have change as I needed it.'

" 'You young fool! Of course he'll keep it safe — so safe you will never touch it again. Well, if that don't beat the Dutch! You'd better come along and talk to the old woman.'

"So I followed the waiter to the bar where a large, cross-eyed, red-faced woman, the same I gave my bundle to, was filling a mug of foaming ale.

" 'Look here, granny,' said the waiter, 'this young beggar owes three bob for bed and board, and hasn't a stiver to pay for it.'

“‘I knows what’ll pay for it,’ said the woman; ‘his bundle o’ clothes ’ll pay for it. So he may go about his business, and the sooner the better, the young scamp, trying to cheat honest folk out o’ their hard earnings. Off with you, out o’ my sight!’

“‘But I want my clothes,’ I whimpered.

“‘When you bring me the money — not before. So off with you, or I’ll have you pulled up for a vagrant and thief. Tom, kick him out!’

“The man led me crying to the door, and putting his hand in his pocket, said, ‘Lad, I’m sorry for ’ee, so I be; here’s a tanner for ’ee, and be more careful o’ your money next time. You can’t trust many men in this world remember.’

“I thanked the good-natured waiter for his sixpence, wiped my eyes, and went wandering along the street; but where to go or what to do, I didn’t know. I wouldn’t have gone home for the world. Home! I had no home. I was turned out, robbed, and cast adrift!

“After strolling along for an hour or more, I found myself down by the docks again, and stood looking at the sailors, who seemed to be so gay and happy at their work.

“I wasn’t there long before a stoutish man in a pea-jacket, came up to me, gave me a slap on the back, and asked me what I was idling away my time there for. When I told him I had nothing else to do, he asked me if I was too lazy to go to work. I said that work was what I was looking for. Then he asked my name and where I came from, and when I told him, he wrote it down in his pocket-book.

“‘Now, then, my lad,’ he said, holding me by the shoulders and looking sharply into my face, ‘if you really want work come aboard my ship and see how you’d like to be my cabin-boy.’

“I was delighted, and followed him aboard his ship like a dog. It was the ‘Royal George,’ the captain’s name was Andrews. They were loading a mixed cargo for the island of Newfoundland and I may as well tell you now that from Newfoundland, we sailed with a cargo of fish to Leghorn, thence to London, thence to New York, and back to Bristol, taking, in all, the better part of a year.

“Well, as soon as we went aboard Captain Andrews showed me what I was expected to do, and asked me if I could read and write. When I told him I could do both and was pretty fair at figures, he seemed to be pleased and made several other inquiries about myself. At last I told him how I’d been treated at the Bull Tavern, which made him so mad he clapped on his hat, seized a big, knotty walking-stick, and ordered me to come along with him. I did so; and pretty soon we came to the tavern by a shorter route than I had found.

“Captain Andrews strode up to the bar, and asked the woman what she meant by robbing his boy of his clothes.

“‘No, sir,’ said the woman, rolling her cross-eyes about like a bullet in a bowl, ‘you do me wrong. I only want my own. Besides, he never told me he was your boy. He owes me three bob for bed and board, and when he pays me, as I told ’n, he can have all his belongings; for God knows I’m

an honest, hard-working woman, and you be the first gent as has ever accused me o' robbery; leastways, if I were a man you wouldn't ha' said the likes without getting a pair o' black eyes to take aboard your ship, I can tell ye!'

"'There's your money,' shouted the captain, slapping three shillings down on the board, 'and now give the boy his property. And more than that, the boy has been robbed of a guinea, all the money he had, here in your house, and I'm going to have the police look into the matter.'

"'As for that, captain,' replied the woman, 'the lad's got no one to blame save hisself; for Tom, my man, tells me as how the boy up and gives the shiner to a stranger to keep for him, and the man, whoever he be, is a-keepin' of it — that's all.'

"'No, that's not all that'll satisfy me,' Captain Andrews replied; 'but, howsoever, let the boy take his bundle now, and as for the other affair I'll put the police on the track of it.'

"With that, the woman tossed my bundle at me, and I followed the captain to the shipping-office where my name was entered on the papers. I then went aboard the 'Royal George' and began life as a cabin-boy.

"That was the 19th day of May, 18—, and from that day to this I've followed the sea. Captain Andrews was one of the best men I ever knew, and 'twas he taught me the first principles of navigation. To tell all my adventures, hardships, persecutions, trials, and shipwrecks, would fill a big book; and, after all, it wouldn't differ greatly from that

of most other sailors. It's a hard life—a dog's life—and the wonder is men can be hired to go into it. And yet, after all's said and done, there is a fascination about the sea, not for boys only, but for old salts themselves. They may curse it, but they seldom quit it so long as they're able to hand, reef, or steer."

V.

CAPTAIN ANTLE, after his remarkable change, developed a power of mental absorption in studying the Scriptures that was truly astonishing and such as enabled him to retain in his memory the greater portion of what he read; and he read with the avidity of one who literally hungered and thirsted after knowledge.

Thus did he draw not only inspiration, but mental and spiritual pabulum from the very fountain-head of divine truth. From these studies he formulated a simple and primitive creed, and saturated his mind with all the richness of a pure and vigorous English.

Of a sanguine temperament, energetic, warm-hearted, fearless, aggressive — in him, we have the make-up of a man who cannot easily be suppressed or long kept in the background. On the contrary, such are the men who always come to the front and eagerly lead in desperate assaults and forlorn hopes. With nothing of the Puritan's narrowness and bigotry, Captain Antle had all the Puritan's fiery zeal and stubborn tenacity.

As a natural consequence, the captain did not wait long for a favorable opportunity to begin his great life-work. He created opportunities. He began at home with those who ministered to him. He began with Mrs. Williams and her husband (a man of mere negative merits), who became daily

attendants at the captain's chamber-meetings, but who, eventually, connected themselves with a near-by Methodist society. Even Molloy felt the prevailing influence and went to mass more frequently, admitting that the captain seemed to him like one of the old saints—like Xavier or DeSales, for example—and ventured to predict, or rather, to bet, that he would end his days in a monastery.

But never was the genial doctor more mistaken in a prognosis; for all the captain desired, and that with his whole heart, was to be able to get out once more among men—out among the publicans and sinners, and into the very thick of the fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil. No dim religious cloister for such as he! Especially did he yearn to be among the sailors, whom he thoroughly understood, in all their trials and temptations, and with whom he heartily sympathized. For this work he was peculiarly adapted; nay, more; divinely called, as he himself believed.

One day, as he was beginning to think about venturing out of doors again, he said to me in his abrupt way, "Charles, I shall want you to help me."

"Certainly, captain," I replied, "I shall be only too happy to do so at any time; but first along, I suppose, you will need your crutch, won't you?"

"Oh, no, Charles! That's not what I mean. I can hobble around now with a stick, well enough. What I want, Charles, is for you to help me in my work. You're a man of education. I want you to be my schoolmaster, and I want you to help me in other ways. There's a work for you to do in

the Lord's Vineyard. The Master is calling you, my dear brother. He has given you more than the one talent. You must put them all to good use, Charles. Yes, I shall want you to help me in the Lord's work."

My entire unworthiness if not inability, to be even the humblest co-laborer with such a man as Captain Antle, was borne in on me with painful consciousness. Hesitating to accept this commission, I shook my head doubtfully.

"Charles," the captain said, taking me gently by the arm, "you love the Lord Jesus?"

This question, propounded in a tone of such tender solicitude, and with such personal directness, was, indeed, extremely searching, and not easily evaded. What could I say that would be at once consistent with the truth and yet perfectly satisfying to my esteemed friend? Observing my embarrassment he laid his hand on my shoulder, and in a voice almost trembling with emotion, said,

"Charles, my dear Charles! You, of all my friends, could not tell me that you do not love that Jesus who shed his most precious blood to save your immortal soul?"

I was at a loss how to answer him. I felt like a convicted culprit. The captain drew me closer to his side, pleadingly, almost, I may say, wooingly.

"Charles, my dear friend! I could never bear to hear from your lips that you did not love my Saviour. It would break my heart. It would, indeed. *You* of all others! Surely, you couldn't do it, Charles!"

"I fear, captain, I do not love Jesus as I ought to," I at

last ventured to reply; "but no intelligent person who has candidly read the Gospels, can possibly fail to admire so perfect, so divine a character."

"Character!" the captain echoed, almost in horror. "Oh, no, Charles, not character! Don't say character! Saviour! Redeemer! The Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world! My sins — your sins! The sweet, spotless, innocent Lamb, slain for me, for you, for all mankind! The just for the unjust to bring us to God. Oh, Charles, Charles! Think of it! Even now he is standing at the door of your heart and knocking. I don't ask you to answer *me*, Charles; but can you refuse to answer *Him*? How long would you let your father or your mother stand knocking at your door? Jesus is more to you than mother or father, or all the world beside."

"If I had your great faith, captain," I replied, almost at a loss what to say, "I know I should be able to declare my love for Jesus; but I have faith enough to believe that my faith will be strengthened and my love increased as we work and pray together. I promise you, captain, I shall do what I can."

"No one can promise more, Charles; no one can do better, provided you cast yourself entirely on the Lord. Nothing but faith can save your soul — faith in your Redeemer. Salvation is offered on no other terms. For forty years I was the vilest of sinners. In the twinkling of a naye, all was forgiven. I know you are different from me, and I know that you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of

the Lord Jesus. Perhaps what was a birth in my soul will be a growth in yours. Oh, my dear friend, I pray the Lord may lead you to Him at last, whatever be the way chosen. I don't ask or expect you to leave your friends, change your occupation, or give much of your time. But, as I say, you being a man of education, one who has always attended church and read the Bible, and been brought up in a Christian home — you, Charles, can be of great assistance to me in my work, in many ways, and I know you will do it. I shall rely on you, at all events. To-morrow, please God, I intend to call on Mr. Buckminster and tell him my plans. Mr. Beals has been to see me several times, good soul; but he's always in such a hurry, and, besides, he's not the man to talk with about such matters, anyway. I must tell the governor first, you know, and then 'twill be all ship-shape — all right. But I suppose he won't listen to my giving up the sea. He'll think I'm crazy, like poor Molloy does, and the rest. But I can't help it, Charles. The Lord is the one to be obeyed. He is the Captain of my salvation."

Accordingly the next forenoon being a sunny April day, the captain left his chambers for the first time in three months, for the purpose of paying his respects to his employers.

Though, ordinarily, the walk would not have taken more than twenty minutes he was nearer two hours in accomplishing it, and that not by reason of his lameness, but because of encountering on the way so many of his old friends and acquaintances, who were eager to grasp his hand and congratulate him on his recovery. Some who had heard of his "craze"

were not a little astonished to find him not only without a keeper, but evidently having no need of one.

In a dingy brick building, pervaded with the odors of east wind, oil, and oakum, were the large but unpretentious offices of Buckminster, Beals & Co., the leading ship-owners in the port. This was in the days before steamers monopolized the ocean carrying-trade, and when fleets of thirty, fifty, and even eighty or more vessels of all rig, flew the burgee of the same great house.

Hither came Captain Antle, and, when announced, the senior partner was alone in his private office.

Mr. Buckminster, a noble type of the old-school merchant, — reserved, courteous, and dignified, — stepped to the door, and leading the captain to an easy-chair at the further corner of the room, proceeded to make the most minute inquiries as to how his visitor was progressing and how soon he thought he should again be fully restored to active life. Mr. Buckminster's manner was extremely cordial and such as gave no indication that he anticipated anything else than a continuance of their existing business-relationships. The captain was still in the pay of the concern, which also assumed all the expenses resulting from his accident. It is not to be supposed, however, that so shrewd a business man as Mr. Buckminster was not somewhat acquainted with the occurrences of the last three months of the old sailor's history; for when the captain informed him of his intention to abandon the sea forever and devote the remainder of his days to doing what he could for the moral and spiritual welfare of his fellow-mariners, the

merchant did not appear to be so much surprised as one may suppose. On the contrary, he readily fell in with the captain's views, and expressed himself as being in cordial sympathy with his philanthropic undertaking.

During the course of their conversation, Mr. Buckminster said substantially, "We are sorry, of course, to lose you, Captain Antle; but the need of such a work as you have outlined, is even greater than the need of master-mariners. It has always appeared to me that our seamen are a much neglected class . . . We are apt to think sailors must be sailors, as we think boys must be boys, and so allow them to go and do pretty much as their inclination leads them, not troubling ourselves so long as they keep fairly within the limits of the law. But why shouldn't they be looked after — be cared for — have some sort of moral, as well as legal restraint and safeguard thrown around them? . . . Yes, Captain Antle, there can be no question that a good moral sailor is likely to be a better man, a more valuable and efficient hand, I mean, than a fellow of the opposite character; for, surely, no man whose nerves are shattered with drink and debauchery can possibly be as reliable and capable, in any event, as a perfectly sound and sober man — a man of correct habits . . . If our seamen can be brought, to any extent, under good, moral influences, it will be a most commendable work, and lead, I have no manner of doubt, to very desirable results . . . I assure you, Captain Antle, I am glad you have consented to undertake this work; for, allow me to say, without meaning to flatter you in the least, that I anticipate great success in your labors.

. . . Whatever I can do, personally, to further your objects, I shall be most happy to do. And in this, I am sure, I shall be seconded and supported by every member of our establishment. More than this, I believe you will have the countenance and support of the entire trade; for no one can possibly fail to appreciate the need of this great and good work."

The captain began to show a little impatience with the merchant's somewhat prosy and practical utterances, and cut him short by saying, "Mr. Buckminster, if I didn't believe the Lord is calling me, no power on earth could persuade me to go into it; for, of myself, I *am* nothing and can *do* nothing. But now that I am convinced that the Lord Almighty is commanding me to do it, no power on earth can prevent me!"

"Certainly, Captain Antle. Of course. You cannot, under the circumstances, do otherwise," responded the merchant. "With that assurance, your line of duty is obvious. And here's another thing that has just occurred to me. It really looks like a special interposition of Providence in your behalf; for, do you know, I am beginning to fear that something has happened to your ship."

"Something happened?" the captain ejaculated.

"Well, captain," replied Mr. Buckminster, turning to a calendar on the wall, "we've heard nothing from the Lass since she left three months ago. She's now overdue nearly four weeks, and we learn that icebergs are uncommonly numerous this season."

"My mate, Mr. Jackson, is navigating her, isn't he?"

"Yes; 'twas the best we could do under the circumstances."

"Mr. Jackson is a very capable man," remarked the captain. "A very competent navigator."

"So we understood."

"Yes, sir, he is. He'd keep well south at this season of the year. He knows enough for that," the captain continued, somewhat absently, as if thinking of something else.

"One would suppose so. But I haven't quite given her up yet. No news, they say, is good news, and while there's life, there's hope, you know."

"*Four weeks overdue!*" the captain said, emphasizing each word, and ending with a low, protracted whistle of alarm.

"Four weeks overdue!" echoed Mr. Buckminster. "Twenty-five or twenty-six days, certainly."

The old mariner doubled himself up with an elbow on each knee and his face buried in his hands, muttering to himself for several seconds; then partially rising and shaking his finger in the merchant's face, he said in an ominous whisper, and with slow emphasis, "Mr. Buckminster, neither you nor I will ever see the Lass again. No, sir; she's gone to the bottom! She never was two weeks overdue since she left her launchways. No, sir; never."

"Certainly not while you had command of her, captain."

"And Mr. Jackson is a man to crowd on every stitch of canvas, if nothing more than to beat my record."

"You think he's that kind of a man, do you?"

"I don't *think* so, sir; I *know* it. And what I often feared of that craft has happened at last—she has foundered in the trough of the sea!"

"Is it possible!"

"She has foundered in the trough of the sea," repeated the captain, emphasizing his assertions with his fist on the elbow of his chair, being evidently much agitated in his mind.

The two men gazed silently into each other's face for several seconds.

"Then you think, captain, that the Lass was hardly seaworthy?" Mr. Buckminster somewhat nervously inquired.

"That's what I reported to the firm, sir, as much as two years ago," returned the captain, looking sternly into the merchant's eye.

"Very strange it never came to my ears," Mr. Buckminster replied with a slight flush. "To whom did you report, Captain Antle?"

"To Mr. Beals. I told Mr. Beals that the sooner the Lass was docked the better for all hands. Yes, sir, two years ago. . . . But what's troubling me now, Mr. Buckminster, is that I shall never be able to undo the mischief I've done aboard that ship."

"Mischief?" queried the merchant in surprise.

"Yes, sir, mischief! They've gone down with my devilish oaths in their ears and my devilish example before their eyes. That's how I've done mischief, and it can never be remedied. No, sir, never!"

So disturbed was the captain with this thought that beads

of perspiration stood on his seamed and rugged brow. The decorous man of business, unaccustomed to such manifestations, drew back and surveyed his visitor with a look of perplexed curiosity. Then, as if to divert the captain's mind from a theme so painfully personal, he remarked, "But, captain, there is this to be considered, you know: if the Lass has foundered, as you suppose, may it not have happened to her whenever the sea was unusually rough?"

"That's just the danger, sir. That's just what I feared."

"Even if you yourself had been in command?"

"It is not unlikely, sir."

"Very well, captain. Now suppose you had gone in her as usual, what then?"

"Then, sir, I should have gone to hell!"

At this unexpected reply, Mr. Buckminster started as if struck by a pistol-ball.

"Oh, no! Captain Antle," he protested; "not so! not so!"

"Not a bit worse than I deserved, sir, considering what a vile, miserable sinner I used to be, without God and without hope in the world."

Mr. Buckminster, after a moment's reflection, asked, "But why not, captain, take a more — take a different view of the case? Why not congratulate yourself that this accident of yours was the means, perhaps, of saving your life?"

"Mr. Buckminster, this accident of mine was the means, under God, of saving my soul, and that's of much greater consequence. Oh, sir!" exclaimed the captain, suddenly

rising to his feet, "I find, since coming in here this morning, that I have more cause than ever to be grateful to my blessed Redeemer! Mr. Buckminster, if you have no objections, we'll have a word of prayer."

Before the merchant could interpose an objection, if he had had any, the captain was on his knees in fervent supplication for divine mercy, light, and guidance. It was probably the first time anything like a religious exercise had ever been held in that room, and it is doubtful if a copy of the Sacred Scriptures, or any of the signs and symbols of the Faith, could have been found on the premises, so little has religion to do with even the most honorably conducted business.

It so happened that in the midst of the captain's prayer, Mr. Beals entered the room, and beholding the attitude of its occupants, looked, for a moment, as if he doubted the evidence of his senses, and questioned whether his partner's reason had not followed the captain's into the land of fantasy.

When Captain Antle had concluded his brief, but extraordinary invocation, and was about to withdraw, he seized the merchant's hand and said, "Mr. Buckminster, I thank you, not only for this privilege, but for all your past kindnesses to me. I know I've been a hard man to get along with. I was a nuisance and a terror, I have no doubt, to you and to everyone else. But on my conscience, sir, I assure you, I always tried to do my duty by the house, and to serve it to the best of my ability."

"Captain Antle," the merchant returned, "let me assure you that we never had the slightest reason to doubt it."

“And now, sir,” continued the captain, “I hope to serve my Saviour for the balance of my life. Mr. Buckminster, I pray that the Lord may bless and prosper you and yours, and make you as good a Christian as you are a considerate, honorable, and generous employer!”

“Thank you, Captain Antle; thank you very much! And now, please remember what I have said; namely, that you will always find me at your service — *always*, remember,” said Mr. Buckminster, shaking the captain’s hand with a degree of effusiveness seldom exhibited by him or by men of his temperament.

VI.

THAT was the concluding chapter in Captain Antle's life as a sailor. When he left the shipping-office, it was no longer as a master-mariner, but as an "apostle to the Gentiles." Almost instinctively he turned his face in the direction of the sea — that sea which, for nearly thirty long years, had been his domain, his home. That sea on which, from boyhood to youth, and from youth to middle age, he had encountered perils innumerable, hardships inconceivable; but where, in spite of all, he had risen to the highest position in his noble and hazardous calling. That sea — that measureless abyss which, to-day, but for an inscrutable Providence, might have been his unknown grave. Again he approached that sea, not as a mariner, but as a messenger of the Most High!

Think of it, reader! See him pacing the street with the light of eternal truth beaming like an aureola from his countenance. See him, like a champion entering the lists, — nay, a soldier of the Lord, going forth to meet the combined hosts of the world, the flesh, and the devil. What a subject for the painter! What a theme for the poet! Does it seem extravagant to suppose that the angels themselves crowded the battlements of Heaven to behold this man as he advanced to the unequal conflict? No; not if there is, indeed, joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Did I say unequal conflict? Not so, for the Almighty was on his side; but this glorious fact was apparent only to the eye of faith. Visibly, he was surrounded by the incarnations of all evils. Blasphemy, debauchery, cruelty, greed, malice, hatred, lust, recklessness, want, woe, and despair crept, crawled, reeled, staggered, stalked, rushed, swept past him. Could he arrest the current? Could he turn the tide — he — one against ten thousand?

But it is not the roar of the great Babel that he hears, it is the murmur of the great deep. The breeze which smites his cheek comes laden with the briny odor so familiar to his senses. And now comes into view the forest of tall spars and fluttering pennants. Once more the captain finds himself on the old wharf from which he had so often put to sea.

There, apparently, are the same piles of goods, the same rows of barrels, the same bales and cases. There are the great ships loading and unloading. There are the stevedores, the wharfingers, the loafers, and the wharf-rats. There are the sailors making ready their craft for another adventurous voyage. There, far away, is the broad, ever-heaving bosom of old ocean!

All is the same, and yet all is changed; for with what different eyes, emotions, aspirations, Captain Antle regards the entire scene! His connection with it now is no longer of a material and worldly character. It is as though he came in the spirit rather than in the flesh. He is not now a part of it, as of old. He comes as from a loftier sphere and

with a commission from Him who created both land and sea, and all that in them is.

Thus, we may presume, he felt; thus he viewed the prospect, till rudely brought down to the dust, as it were, by the vigorous grasp and boisterous voice of a brother-navigator, Captain Tom Benson, as typical an old salt as ever stepped on a deck or posed for a painter.

With a freshly-lighted cigar in his mouth, Benson emerged from a gang of loafers looking for work or trying to avoid it. "Hello, Antle! gad's-man! how are you?" shouted the bluff sailor, approaching the captain with outstretched hand.

"All right now, thank you, Benson," the captain replied. "Never better in my life. Glad to see you."

"Glad to see *you*, Antle. Heard you were laid up for repairs. See you carry a jury-mast yet. Old ship gone to bottom, eh? Plaguy lucky you met with that little slip-up, eh? ha! ha! ha! It's an ill wind, you know. Well, hope to see you on deck again before long, Antle."

"I hope so, too, Benson — on a good many decks. When did you drop anchor?"

"Last night. Deuced rough passage! Icebergs thick as blackberries. Came plaguy near bumping into one ourselves. Should have been in a hotter climate than this to-day, eh? ha! ha! ha!" And Benson pushed back his hat and wiped his forehead with a red bandanna.

Captain Antle shuddered to think that there was a time when he would have enjoyed this jest.

"Bound up country, as soon's I get a dish of oysters,"

continued Benson, knocking the ashes off his cigar. "Spliced the main brace yet, Antle? No? Well, come along and have a snack with me."

"No, thanks, Benson. I'll wait till dinner-time."

"But you'll have a glass o' grog, anyway. 'Twill give you an appetite for your dinner."

"No more grog for me, Benson."

"The dickens! What d'you mean?"

"I mean, with God's help, never to taste another drop of liquor so long as I live," returned the captain, looking steadily into Benson's eyes and giving the plank an emphatic prod with his cane.

"Why Antle! How you talk! Have the quacks got onto you so bad as all that?"

"No, Benson, the quacks haven't got onto me; but the Lord has, and with his help I purpose leading a different kind of life from what I have been. To tell you the truth, Benson, I'm trying to be a Christian, and mean to serve the Lord for the rest of my life, if possible."

Benson stared at his interlocutor with a smile of incredulity playing round his lips, and then said, "I'll tell you, George, what I think's the trouble with you; you've been laid up so long among quacks and nurses that your liver's out o' kilter—you've lost your grip. All you need is a good dose of tar and bilge-water to bring you round again. But don't be afraid, Antle; you'll come out all right."

"Afraid!" exclaimed the captain, with a gleam of the old fire in his eye, and a spasmodic clutching of the fists.

"Did you ever know George Antle to be afraid, Benson?"

"Well, no — no, George, I can't say I ever did," Benson replied, apologetically. "What I mean is ——"

"No matter what you mean, Benson," interrupted Captain Antle. "Never say I'm afraid to do what I think is right."

Benson grabbed Captain Antle's hand, and vigorously shaking it, said, "George, old boy, I didn't mean to cast any reflections; but I know how it was myself when I came out o' that there cursed hospital in Liverpool ten years ago. Blest if you couldn't have knocked me down with a feather; but as soon's I smelt o' tar and salt water, I was all hunkey. So you're trying to be a Christian, eh? Good! I could see there was something the matter as soon's you hove in sight; but I supposed 'twas only owing to want of exercise. Well, I'm 'counted a pretty fair sort o' Christian myself up to home. Me and the old woman goes to church reg'lar every Sunday. But look 'ee here, George, you don't mean to keep this thing up right along, eh? — do you?" with an incredulous grin.

"With the help of the Lord, my dear Benson, I hope to be a Christian at all times and in all places," the captain replied.

"You do, eh? Well, but how the world d' you expect to get along among the boys? And then, again, if you're going to be a reg'lar upright, down-straight, long-faced, psalm-singing Methody, how be you going to handle one o' those here scraped-up crews we sometimes get afoul of — black, white, and yaller, — cutthroat Lascar, Portugee pirate, and the

dickens knows what? How be you going to 'force the laws o' navigation among such an infernal set o' devils as them, to keep forrid o' the main hatch, without showing your teeth sometimes, and giving 'em hell, eh?"

"No more of that for me, Benson. I 've got through with all that sort of thing, thank God," the captain replied. "What I care for now, Benson, is to save men's souls. In place of enforcing the law, I hope to carry the gospel, and give them heaven instead of hell."

Benson stared at the captain in blank amazement for a second or two, and then, significantly tapping his forehead, said, with an expression of mock solemnity, "See here, Antle, old fellow — you haven't taken leave, have you, eh?"

"Yes, Benson, I have," the captain promptly replied. "I 've taken leave of the devil and all his works."

This was too much for the profane and hilarious Benson, who, clapping his hands to his sides, leaned back and laughed so obstreperously that he must have been heard half across the river. When he recovered so as to be able to speak, he asked the captain derisively what else he proposed to do while he was at it.

"I propose, with God's help, to lead every seaman I can reach to the Saviour, Benson; and so I 'll begin with you."

"Antle, look 'ee here, my old friend; you 'll have the goodness to excuse me to-day. I 'm awful glad to see you round again. Sorry you lost your ship. Hope you 'll have a good time in the leading business; but let me tell you, Antle, my boy, if you expect to bring round the merchant-

marine to your way o' thinking, why, all I can say is, you've bit off more 'n you can chaw. Howsoever, I wish you joy in it, all the same. Well, I'll have to skip lively. Be good to yourself. Ta-ta!"

As Benson trotted off with his cigar in the corner of his mouth, and his rusty, old-style beaver on the back of his head, Captain Antle looked after him more in pity than in anger, and murmured, "The Lord help you, you blind maw-worm! The Lord open your eyes, and show you what a poor, miserable, creeping, crawling creature you are, with all your bluff and bluster. God help you!" . . .

This was the opening skirmish of Captain Antle's campaign among the sailors. It was a fair sample of many a contest which was to follow — some of equally doubtful issue, others resulting in triumphant victory.

* * *

To the beginner in any work of reform, but especially in carrying the message of the gospel, the Benson type of character is peculiarly discouraging, and such as might well dishearten any man less resolute and self-forgetful than Captain Antle. But, like a true and loyal soldier of the cross, defeat only stimulated him to greater deeds of valor. Though a fresh recruit, as one may say, he was a veteran as to his knowledge of men and of human nature. He knew full well that he should have to encounter many a Benson, many a more difficult and formidable character, even, than Benson, who, after all, as anyone can see, was a plain, blunt, superficial sort of fellow, whose wickedness was more the result of ignorance and

misconception, than from real corruption of heart. Yes, the captain would have to meet many a man who appears to be protected at all points with an invulnerable coat of mail. People who claim to be neither better nor worse than their neighbors. People who boast of being no hypocrites, who make no pretension to saintship or even to common morality. People who contend that if the "good things" of life were not meant to be enjoyed, such things would never have been in existence, and that if passions and appetites weren't meant to be gratified, God would have omitted them altogether in our make-up. People who advance the plea that a man who is knocking about the world for half-a-year, denied all the amenities of civilized society, may be permitted some little indulgence when he comes ashore; for if anyone may be said to have earned a "good time," surely it is the poor sailor, etc.

All very plausible, of course, but only a faint inkling of the defenses set up by those whom the missionary-captain approached in his reformatory and evangelistic labors. Scores and hundreds had no more reasonable excuses for their conduct, and appeared to be well satisfied that whatever may be the law or the gospel for others, they themselves were exempt from any such embarrassing obligations.

All forms of mission work, to be positively successful, must possess this feature in common; namely, direct personal appeal. The apostles themselves were commissioned to preach the gospel to "every creature"—the bearer of good tidings being never more sure of acceptance than when

his appeal is direct and individual. The friendly hand-shake, the face-to-face encounter, the magnetism of personal contact, who can ignore? who can resist? You have forgotten many an eloquent sermon, but not the few kind words addressed to you confidentially by the preacher. "Come, let us reason together," is a divine invitation, and, therefore, the truest ethics, the profoundest philosophy. It respects a basic principle of human nature, and renders possible the subsequent cleansing and reconciliation. The world comes up to the prophet when the prophet comes down to the world.

It was in this fraternizing and truly evangelistic spirit that Captain Antle began and carried forward his work.

But very soon he became convinced that something more than this — something more than kind words and a friendly greeting — was needed. That, to give permanency to the result of his labors, he must have "a local habitation and a name;" in short, he must secure a commodious and attractive headquarters. To use his own expression, in those pioneer days, he needed a basket in which to gather his fruit.

It was of little use to intercept Jack on his eager way to the haunts of vice, the delightful possibilities of which stimulated his imagination and made life endurable through many a dreary day and comfortless night — it was little use to arrest him when about to realize this dream and desire of his heart — without offering him a reasonable substitute — without giving him something besides a friendly warning, how-

ever needful or sincere — without some compensation for obedience to the “thou shalt not.” In a word, if forbidden to go to *one* place, he must be invited to come to *another* — to a place where he might meet his true friends, and receive a hearty welcome at any time.

Outside of his ship, Jack, for the most part, has no other home in the wide world, and though there is no lack of places where he may be sure to find a hearty greeting, so long as his money holds out, it was to prevent his reaching these very places that the captain prayed, planned, and labored.

Many a weary day did he spend in exploring streets, alleys, cellars, attics, stores, halls, houses, and all sorts of places, in search of an apartment at once suitable for his purpose, and yet not too exorbitant as to cost. Sometimes, during this fatiguing investigation, the captain, with all his buoyant hopefulness, seemed well-nigh discouraged, fearing lest he should be compelled to make arrangements with some down-town church for the use of their vestry, which, to his mind, would be a most objectionable alternative; because, in the first place, he was desirous of avoiding all appearance of denominationalism; and, in the second place, he knew full well that a church-building could never offer the kind of attraction to Jack that such a room as the captain had in mind would be sure to do. But, stronger than all other reasons, there was really no such ecclesiastical edifice within easy reach or at all available. To secure the best results, his headquarters must be on a great public thoroughfare, and as near the wharves as possible.

In these modern days of "Mariner's Homes," "Bethels," "Safe Havens," "Friendly Harbors," and the like, when wealthy societies and thoroughly organized institutions direct such labors and hold the egis of protection over the missionary, the difficulties that confronted the pioneer in this field can be but imperfectly realized. Very few, even among professional philanthropists and intelligent Christians, bestowed much serious thought on the sailor. By the majority, he was regarded as a queer, hybrid, amphibious creature in human shape, a sort of merman, amusing, but not unpicturesque, who was always "hitching his ducks," "shivering his timbers," "chewing his quid," normally "half-seas over," and always "getting into scrapes." These, and even worse, seemed to be accepted as Jack Tar's natural, inseparable characteristics. He could, in the very nature of things, be no otherwise than an eccentric, reckless debauchee, and an exception to all the rules of civilized society. The worst of it was, that even good, sensible people seemed to rest satisfied that these conditions were unalterable, inevitable, and that little or nothing could be done to remedy the evil.

It is due, however, to such men as Captain Antle, that, to-day, the sailor is no longer regarded in this light—no longer considered an outcast and a pariah, but a man and a brother, and, furthermore, that the sea-faring life no longer means to most people little else than perdition, moral and physical, to all who choose it as their occupation.

VII.

BEFORE the captain had succeeded in finding a room to his liking, I was sent as supercargo to a foreign port, and, consequently, heard nothing from Captain Antle for a number of months. The very day after my return, however, I met him on the street. He was hurrying along, as usual, and looking the impersonation of good humor and energy.

"Charles!" he exclaimed, seizing my hand, "the Lord has dealt bountifully with us, and brought us at last into the Promised Land! Have you heard about it?"

"No, not a word," I replied. "You have succeeded in finding a room, I suppose?"

"We have, Charles; and a noble room it is, too. We crossed the Jordan three months ago, and have been feeding on the milk and honey of the Word ever since. Yes, we have noble quarters down here in Water Street—No. 27, I'm on my way there now. Come along with me and see what we're doing!"—grabbing my arm.

As I couldn't well accompany him just then, I begged to be excused till the evening, when I promised to meet him at his headquarters in Water Street, which was not a great distance from our office.

"Yes, Charles," continued the captain, "I found that I must have a good large room, and that, too, right down among my poor homeless boys. For the sailor has only his

fo'castle at sea, and a much worse place on the land. Scores to rob him and few to befriend. Grog-shops and brothels open day and night; but no decent house for him to enter — no home, no church, no refuge for the poor sailor, till I found this place down in Water Street, where I gather them under my wings like an old hen. And, Charles, who do you suppose has done it all for us, under the Lord? Why, your blessed Mr. Buckminster! He bought the building and gave us the room free! What do you think of that? Oh, it's wonderful! wonderful! Be sure and run round this evening! I shall expect you!"

Though Water Street was one of the lowest and vilest thoroughfares in the port, it was just the location for Captain Antle to intercept the sailor as he rolled up from his ship in quest of whatever might tempt him to throw away his money, be it cheap jewellery, slop-clothing, variety-shows, cellar-dances, bad rum, or abandoned women.

People usually suppose that sailors are hard to manage — difficult to lead; but such is really not the case. They are easy enough to manage, if you have the tact, if you only know how. Like overgrown children, sailors are ready to confide in almost anyone, and perfectly willing to accompany you either to a playhouse or a prayer-meeting. It is all one to Jack, so it is some kind of entertainment, and I'll guarantee he'll behave like a gentleman in either place; only when the "show" is over, he will want to "stand treat" like a man, and be grievously offended should you decline his generosity.

Now here is the point: Jack may be a big boy, but he is no milksop; an overgrown child, but not a baby. He's a man, every inch of him, as anyone will soon discover who offers him an insult; and so peculiar is his code of honor, that unless you understand him and his ethics, and are extremely cautious, the insult may come when least expected, and from what to you may appear very insufficient reasons. Consequently, a dull-witted, tactless, stupid person, however good-hearted and sincere, may do fairly well as an hostler, but don't let him attempt to be a missionary or hope to do any good work among sailor-boys. As it takes a rogue to catch a rogue, so it takes a sailor to manage a sailor; and who was ever better qualified to do this than Captain George Antle? And where was there a more favorable site for his mission-room than on this much-despised Water Street?

I had no difficulty in finding the place, for along the front of the building was a wide strip of canvas bearing this inscription, "Sailor's Snug Harbor," which, at the outset, had a suggestion of comfort and security very inviting and attractive. I found it to be a large room, formerly a store of some kind, in a three-story building, the upper floors being used for storage purposes. The two show-windows were painted white half way up, by way of screen. Inside the entrance, which was two steps from the sidewalk, was a sort of temporary vestibule with a side-door leading into the main room. Settees and chairs occupied the larger portion of the floor, and at the sides were tables covered with papers,

magazines, tracts, Bibles, hymn-books, games, and writing-materials. In the corner, at the right of the entrance, stood a huge water-tank with a tray of glasses. At the further end, or head of the hall, as we may call it, was a raised platform or dais, furnished with a reading-desk, several chairs, and a table. On the walls hung a number of maps, pictures, and cards, and behind the desk, ticked a small clock. There was a plentiful supply of sand-boxes; for, though smoking was forbidden, Jack could scarcely be expected to leave his quid on the doorstep. On the whole, it was a convenient and attractive room, and not unworthy its claim of being a "Sailors' Snug Harbor."

On further inquiry, I found that the "Water-street Mission," as it came to be generally known, was very much more than a room in which straggling, homeless sailors might receive recognition and good advice. Whatever projects or plans Captain Antle may have had in mind in the beginning of the work, he soon became assured that to do any real and permanent good, a more comprehensive base of operations must be laid. The raw material upon which he had to work needed careful and dexterous manipulation. Before anything of a moral nature could be attempted, much of a decidedly practical character had to be inaugurated. The simple-minded sailor must see some obvious benefit in connection with the mission. However recklessly he throws away his hard-earned dollars, Jack wants something to show for it, even if it be only a broken head or a black eye. The prohibitive side of morality has a barren aspect, and the reward of virtue seems scant and meagre.

Consequently, one of the first things the captain found it necessary to do, was to constitute the mission into a sort of sailors' bureau, exchange, or bank. It didn't require much persuasion or argument to assure the men that the less loose money they carried about with them, the better it would be for them; certainly, the less likelihood there would be of losing it. As a general rule, they very readily entrusted the captain with what money they did not need for immediate use. These sums, being duly receipted, were deposited in the savings' banks, and when the men wanted a little cash, the captain gave it to them out of his own pocket, and, like another famous captain, "made a note of it." When ready for sea, if they wanted all their money, they could have it; but many, who anticipated a return voyage, allowed their deposits to remain on interest, so that they might have something against the inevitable rainy day. Many a sensible man fully appreciated the fact that this transaction not only protected him from the harpies and land-sharks, but from his own folly and extravagance, as well.

Besides this, in the mission-room was to be found a list of good boarding-houses, where Jack ashore would be well cared for and not fleeced; also, a list of stores where he might obtain good bargains without the risk of being cheated. What with maps, charts, directories, gazetteers, lists and descriptions of all the vessels belonging to the port, the latest marine intelligence, together with much oral information of no little value to all concerned, it will be seen at a glance that the Water-street Mission was an institution

whose usefulness might well be appreciated, even in circles outside the limits of the sea-faring community.

Although Mr. Buckminster's name was never publicly mentioned in connection with the mission, it was well known in the office that the head of the firm was interested in the work, if not, indeed, its principal patron and supporter. So it soon became the correct thing, or, at all events good policy, for parties of two or three to "drop anchor" of an evening at the "Snug Harbor," partly out of curiosity, as one of the cheap entertainments of the city, and partly out of good will to the captain, whom they all liked and were glad to assist in any way in their power. Several of our young men were good singers and their voices would chime in effectively with the sailor-boys who rendered, in their vociferous way, the psalmody of the mission.

It so happened that on this very evening of my first visit, three of our men dropped in, much to my surprise; for I knew they were not among the "seriously disposed" set, but, on the contrary, often referred jocosely to "the captain's prayer-meeting" in the private office, and were the first to dub as "Antlemites" those who assisted his mission. All the same, they were good fellows at heart, and meant no harm by their little gibes at the captain's expense. That prayer of his in the private office was evidently destined to become one of the traditions of the house.

As it was early in the evening when I entered the room, the few men present were passing the time playing games or reading. One young fellow appeared to be laboriously

writing a letter, perhaps to his mother on the other side the Atlantic, and cheering her anxious heart, let us hope, with the assurance that his epistle was addressed from so good a place as Captain Antle's "Snug Harbor."

The captain himself, burly and brisk, soon "hove in sight," and after giving me a hearty welcome, went round with a hand-grasp and a few kind words to each man in the room. It was delightful to see their eyes sparkle and their cheeks flush with pleasure as the captain chatted with them. It was very evident that these warm-hearted boys almost adored him. I couldn't help thinking, "What would be the fate of anyone who should attempt to do 'the old man' any violence in their presence!"

When seated beside the captain at his little desk in a corner of the room, he informed me, among other things, that every evening they had some kind of an entertainment. A few of the boys brought musical instruments, others could sing a song, others spin a yarn or read a story from one of the periodicals; but they always spent half-an-hour or more in religious exercises before separating for the evening.

"What we endeavor to do," said the captain, "is to make our boys feel as much at home here as possible—to feel, you know, just as if each man was in his own house. We don't want any formality or stiffness. If a man feels like praying, God bless him! let him pray; or if like singing, God bless him! let him sing; or if like talking, let him talk and welcome. In fact, Charles, this is as free-and-easy a place as you ever got into."

"But, captain," I ventured to object, "isn't this liberty abused sometimes? Don't you find that some of your visitors are apt to go a little too far and so make themselves offensive?"

"Not a bit of it! Not a bit of it!" was the captain's emphatic reply. "Besides, our boys have a way of shutting up a crank like a jack-knife. A hymn or a prayer can always knock a nuisance off his feet. Oh, I can tell you, we don't stand upon ceremony here! We soon squelch a bore. But, as a general thing, our meetings are as sweet and orderly as any of your uptown gatherings and ten times more wide-awake and hearty."

By the time the rapidly-ticking little clock indicated the hour of eight, there were, perhaps, sixty or seventy men in the hall, among whom was one with his banjo and another carrying under his arm that favorite instrument of sailors, an accordion.

When the captain stepped upon the platform, the buzz of conversation ceased and stragglers found seats. He then opened the Bible and read the One Hundred and Seventh Psalm, and read it, too, in a manner that lent its sublime phraseology a richness and depth of meaning that it never before seemed to convey to my mind. Especially impressive and appropriate was the passage, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep," etc.

This was followed by a brief, simple, fervent prayer, after which was sung that soul-stirring hymn,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

It would have kindled the zeal of the most luke-warm Christian to hear how those broad-chested sailors rendered the refrain,

“Crown Him Lord of all!”

There was in it the warlike ring of a challenge, as if they defied any one who should refuse to crown Jesus Lord of all! Verily, there is a noble spirit of heroism in Jack’s heart which makes him, as he may be led, either a fervent Christian or an ardent patriot.

At the captain’s earnest entreaty, I then read a ballad from a recent magazine entitled, “The Lighthouse-keeper’s Daughter,” a story of storm, shipwreck, and rescue, which was received by my audience in a manner that would have gratified, if not surprised, any professional reader. At every strong point or particularly graphic stroke, the captain, or some of his men, would exclaim “Ay, ay!” “That’s so!” “God bless her!” “She’s an angel, boys, ain’t she!” — while not a few were mopping their eyes as freely as if, instead of able-bodied seamen, they were sentimental school-girls. Evidently their struggles with “Rude Boreas” had not deprived them of all feeling and sympathy; nay, rather, had given them a keener appreciation of the poem.

Our office-trio then sang a song, which was so well received that it had to be twice repeated before the boys were satisfied. This was followed by a humorous recitation by the “funny man” of the house; then came a negro melody by the man with the banjo and several airs on the accordion. Finally, the office-trio sang another song, and

this concluded what may be called the secular part of the evening's exercises. Half-an-hour succeeded of a more purely devotional character, when several of the sailors present gave their "experience," offered prayer, and sang the old hymns with a whole-souled fervor that was truly refreshing to one unaccustomed to such occasions and such people.

It appeared that not a few of these rough-looking men had, for years, been endeavoring to serve Him who commanded the winds and waters and they obeyed Him; while others had but recently embarked on the voyage, and, with pathetic earnestness, besought the prayers of Christians that their strength might not fail in the hour of peril and temptation. When I thought of what these poor, simple-minded lads had to contend with in their endeavors to follow the footsteps of the Master, I sympathized with them from the bottom of my heart.

As viewed from the platform, the audience presented a remarkable appearance. Most of the men were young, many of them good-looking, both physically and morally, and all wide-awake and eagerly attentive. I should judge that at least half-a-dozen nationalities were represented in the gathering. One could readily pick out the fair-haired natives of northern Europe from among their more swarthy southern neighbors; but the majority were evidently English, Provincial, and American.

The vim and *abandon* with which these sons of the sea entered into the spirit of the occasion was a revelation to one

accustomed to the formal, dead-and-alive congregations of so many city churches. As I sat looking at these men, I couldn't help thinking, "Here are fifty or sixty persons brought together for a couple of hours, most of whom never saw each other before and may never meet again — strangers to us and to one another. And yet, for the time being, they seem as much of a solidarity as any society or congregation in the city. They sit, converse, listen, laugh, weep, sing, and pray together; but in a few weeks, or even days, where will they be? Scattered to the four winds of heaven? Are they not like birds of passage which, of a May morning, fill the grove with their united melody, but, long before the leaves are sere, will have flitted hundreds of leagues away and apart?"

It is true that there may be a difference of opinion concerning the character of the meeting, I have attempted to describe, — some regarding it as rather tame for a "variety show," and others as far too lively and mixed for a religious service; but such as it was, it evidently best suited the people and the place. For myself, I must confess, I should have preferred it to be all entertainment or all devotional; but, on the whole, it was one of the most interesting and enjoyable gatherings of the kind I ever attended, notwithstanding that all through it there came the outside roar and rattle of the town, the shouting and screaming of the street Arabs, and the various other noises of a great public thoroughfare.

VIII.

AS the weeks and months passed, the fame of the Water-street Mission extended, so that among those who began to make their appearance at the Sunday-services were not a few uptown people, who discovered in Captain Antle a man of picturesque presence, marked originality, and unusual gifts as an evangelist. Thus, without the slightest idea of ever becoming a "pulpit orator," he preached, Sunday after Sunday, to multitudes who heard him gladly.

His sermons, or more correctly speaking, his hortatory addresses, were so unconventional in matter and manner, so lucid in style, so earnest and forcible in delivery, that they never failed to interest where they did not always convince. It may be aptly said of him, and with all due reverence, that he spake as one having authority, not as the scribes — not as the common herd of preachers. As for me, knowing him so long and intimately, I could not help asking myself, Whence hath this man all these rare qualifications of a popular preacher? And yet, nothing surprised the captain more than to find "outsiders" drawn to the mission-room, simply on account of his preaching.

"My preaching!" he once said to me. "Why, Charles, I'm no preacher. You know I'm not. I'm nothing but a poor ignorant sailor talking to other poor ignorant sailors. Outsiders may come and welcome; but unless the Lord

feed them, they'll find poor fare in this place, I can tell them."

But the truth is that people were much better fed than the captain seemed inclined to suppose. They were fed on the pure marrow of the Word — a diet of which they stood much in need. And yet, his discourses were as artless and unsophisticated as the winds and waves. As you looked and listened, you associated him with natural features and phenomena — with cliffs and billows and boulders. He suggested Elijah and John the Baptist. You felt that you were being instructed by one whose teaching and interpretation came not second-hand from the schools, but directly from the fountain-head of Truth. There were no theological subtleties, no refinements of dogma, no explaining away of the law or the gospel, no attempt to solve any of the problems which puzzle and divide Christendom — nothing but the simple, naked, rugged truth, as expressed in the Word — no more, no less. No college-training had educated him out of his faith or chilled the ardor of his devotion. He believed that the spiritual birth was as essential to salvation as the physical birth is to existence itself. Of this, he needed no more convincing evidence than his own experience. "I was blind, now I see. I loved sin, now I hate it. I was in darkness, now I am in the light." The contrasts in his life were so strong, absolute, and well-defined, that there could be no doubt or difficulty in the matter. What, therefore, was possible for him, was possible for all. What saved his soul could save any soul. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye

shall be saved," was his creed, his oft-recurring text, and the perpetual theme of his discourse and conversation.

To confess Christ, he considered so obvious and paramount a duty for all, that it admitted of no question; nor could there exist any obstacle so formidable as to forbid anyone becoming a Christian, who so desired. A young sailor with whom he was once laboring said, "Captain, I'd like to be a Christian, but you know how it is yourself. You know how I'd be picked upon by the whole ship's company from the old man down to the doctor's mate."

This was an unfortunate excuse to make to such a man as Captain Antle, who immediately retorted, "So you are too cowardly to be a Christian, are you?"

"No, captain; not if I could fight 'em; but when they know I daren't hit back, then wouldn't I have to take it!"

"Very well, take it! If you're afraid to trust God, you're afraid to face men, and so have to own up to it that you are too cowardly to confess Christ. My son, it don't make any difference if they pick all the flesh off your bones and throw you to the sharks piecemeal, you can take your departure to glory from a shark's maw just as well as from a feather bed. Besides, it isn't what this little life can give or deny us by confessing Christ, it is what all eternity has in store for us—that's the only thing worth considering in the matter—the rest is moonshine."

* * *

One Sunday morning the pastor of a "fashionable" up-town church made this announcement to his congregation:

“Many, perhaps most of you, may not be aware that a work has been inaugurated in this city for the benefit of our mariners, which is of a character that deserves the heartiest sympathy of all Christians, of whatever creed or denomination. Any of you, my friends, who are at all acquainted with this class of people, must know how badly the sailor stands in need of kindly care and friendly protection. It is not too much to say that, in view of the hazardous nature of his calling, he *compels* our gratitude, our respect, our service. But the difficulty of reaching these men, more especially of influencing them in the right direction, can be appreciated only by those who have attempted the task.

“The sailor leaps ashore with the determination of enjoying to the full what he has been so long denied. Eager for all the baser sensual gratifications within easy reach, the inducement must be very powerful, indeed, which can turn him in an opposite direction. It is very doubtful, my friends, if you or I, with all our devotion to the Master, with all our zeal to save souls, to rescue the fallen, and to lead sinners to repentance — nay, with the most sincere love for the poor sailor and the most ardent desire to do him good, — I say it is very doubtful if we could exert sufficient influence over him, as he lands on our shores, to induce him to accompany us to Sunday-school or church, rather than hasten to the vicious and debasing indulgences he is so eager to reach. Indeed, I am persuaded that no one but an individual peculiarly fitted by nature and training, as well as by the grace of God, can hope to do successful work in this direction.

"Now I am exceedingly thankful to be able to inform you that such a man has been raised up in our midst by Divine Providence to discharge this great, this difficult, this urgent duty — a man who appears to possess peculiar qualifications, both of head and heart, to institute and carry forward a mission among the class of people who dwell near the docks, and more particularly among the sailors — I refer to Captain Antle, who, I understand, has finally abandoned the sea that he may devote himself exclusively to this apostolic labor.

"I have but recently learned of the existence of this mission, and that through one of the members of our choir, who, on a late occasion, visited the mission-room and enjoyed, so he assures me, not only a delightful but a most profitable experience.

"Now, my friends, let me ask you, have we not a sacred duty to perform in this direction? Should we regard this work with supine indifference, and turn a deaf ear to the call, even if this mission *is* outside the pale, and not under the guardianship and control of the Church? Is that a valid excuse? Sailors have souls to save, and souls, which, if saved at all, must be saved through human instrumentality — through our prayers, our persuasion, our sympathy. In view of this, should we allow our good brother to toil on any longer without our assistance, or, at least, our recognition?

"Captain Antle's mission-room is at 27 Water Street, not an inviting quarter of the town, I'll admit, but all the more needing the infusion of a purer element — a holier influence.

It is my purpose to embrace the first opportunity to visit Captain Antle's mission, and I trust that as many of you as can, will accompany me or go yourselves, so that we may show our good brother that he is not without that Christian sympathy, that benignant charity, which blesseth him who gives as well as him who takes."

The effect of this and similar reminders from other pulpits was to awaken a lively interest in Captain Antle's work, and to induce many to visit the room who had never heard of it before. Men and women whose dainty feet had never pressed the foul pavement of Water Street, who had never come in contact with its still fouler denizens, ventured down in that region for the first time in their lives, and deemed themselves well rewarded in the experience.

So pleased were many of these cultured visitors with the captain and his novel methods that they desired to hear him more frequently, but as far removed as possible from the objectionable associations of Water Street. Accordingly, invitations to "exchange" with the uptown pastors came to the captain, which, to a man with any vanity and less common-sense, would have been highly flattering. But how was it possible for any of those polished clergy to "exchange" with this rugged and unkempt son of Neptune! Away from his customary surroundings and his "peculiar people," Captain Antle would only have been grotesquely out of place. This fact no one appreciated more fully than the captain himself, who, to all such overtures, would reply, "No, no! I'm no preacher. I'm nothing but a poor uneducated sailor,

who, with God's help, is trying to lead his brother sailors to the Lord Jesus. Like my blessed Master, I have come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel — to sailors and sailors only. They know my voice and I know their temptations, and no power on earth can separate me from my children even for a single day."

That settled the matter.

But notwithstanding this determination to abide within his own lines and work in his own way, something like a new departure would have to be taken; for the mission was growing at such a pace that not only was a more comprehensive and thorough organization imperatively demanded, but the room itself was altogether too small to accommodate the people who besieged its doors. Nor were there wanting men and means to further this development and so enable the mission to satisfy the demands made on its resources. Mr. Buckminster was not the only great shipowner and capitalist who recognized the value of Captain Antle's labors and liberally offered of their substance to secure for his mission its largest possible measure of usefulness. It is true, however, that nearly all these proffers of assistance were hampered with certain conditions which, from the captain's standpoint, made it impossible for him to accept them. They were all, more or less, of a sectarian character, and, therefore, not in perfect harmony with Captain Antle's principles and plans.

It goes without saying, that an institution like the Water-street Mission is not, like Minerva, brought forth perfectly

formed and fully equipped. It is a growth, a development from the simple to the complex. It had material as well as spiritual interests to be looked after; and consequently as its limits expanded and became more comprehensive, business methods became obviously essential to its stability and success. System, order, and promptness were absolutely necessary to carry on the work and provide for emergencies. Hence, a person of altogether different habit of mind and training from the captain was needed to assist and supplement him — a man to look after the practical details of the mission — in a word, a business-manager; and this is why Henry M. Watson became connected with the work. In this gentleman, the experienced eye of Mr. Buckminster had detected just the qualities of head and heart that would make him a most efficient auxiliary to the captain — a sort of first-mate, “to keep the log-book,” as the captain used to say. The only drawback was that Mr. Watson knew nothing about the sea or sailors; but this proved a small matter with a man so versatile and efficient. He was a good singer, and could lead a prayer-meeting just as well as he could keep the books and look after the finances of the mission.

At first, Mr. Watson gave only a portion of his time to the work; but as it increased, he found it necessary to appropriate a corner of the room as an office and devote himself almost exclusively to its interests. There was a corps of missionary-workers to be organized and directed, books to be kept, cards, tracts, circulars, and bills to be printed, letters to be written, visits to be made to all sorts and conditions of

people, and, indeed, an amount of detail which demanded constant activity, tact, and method.

For one thing, all recently-arrived sailors — as many as could be reached — were individually requested to visit the Snug Harbor before entering any other door in port. They were asked to do this, not only as a favor to Captain Antle, but as something that would be very much to their own interests. To each man was given a card showing the address of the Snug Harbor on one side, and an attractive picture on the other. This simple device drew scores to the room, and it was seldom that the captain got hold of a man on whom he failed to make an impression for good. Foreigners, even, who could scarcely understand one word of English, found the Snug Harbor a desirable "port of call," if only for the sake of the information they gathered as to where they could lay out their earnings to the best advantage or find good lodgings while in port.

By way of further illustrating the character of the work done, I recall a few episodes of the earlier history of the mission, noting them at random as they come to mind.

IX.

"WELL, are you going to call on the captain to-day, boys?" asked one of the mission-workers of a couple of young sailors who had just stepped ashore on a lark.

"Captain? Captain who?"

"Why, Captain Antle, of course, of the Snug Harbor."

"Never heard of the man."

"What! never heard of Captain Antle?"

"No. We're strangers, you know. Never here before."

"Well, boys, Captain Antle would like to see you, all the same. He's got something to say to you."

"See here! You're guying us, old man. We ain't got anything to pawn — see?"

"You're wrong, boys. The captain is not a broker. All he wants is to shake hands with you and tell you something to your advantage. Come along and see him. It won't take you five minutes."

"What's say, Bill, will you go?" one asks of the other.

"Don't care if I do," is the reply.

"All right; let's go and see, for the fun of it. We want all the fun we can have now we're ashore once more, you know, mister."

"Fun! A jollier old fellow than Captain Antle never cracked a biscuit. Here we are, lads. Here's the Snug Harbor. Let's drop anchor and see what the old man wants of us."

The two boys, thus introduced to the captain, made the Snug Harbor their home all the time they were in port, and thereby demonstrated how much they appreciated the privilege.

But such a case as this was far from being an every-day occurrence. It may truthfully be said that many were called, but few were chosen; that is, comparatively few. Many would look in a few times, perhaps; but the theatre and other less innocent attractions proved too strong for them.

* * *

"Well, cap'n, it's just like this," said a good-looking, intelligent provincial boy who with his chum was on his way up Water Street to a theatre one evening. "We promised our mothers we shouldn't drink no spirits nor go to no bad houses, and what's more, we don't mean to, either. Me and my messmate here we goes round together and don't want no other company. We goes to the play, or mebbe, the Music Hall, or has an oyster-stew and a glass o' ginger beer; but we never drinks no intoxicants, nor treats no girls, nor gets into no rows, and it don't seem as though we was adoin' no harm to nobody. We come from a small place down East where there's not a thing to see, so we want to see all we can while we got the chance."

Certainly, compared with most sailors when ashore, these boys were models of propriety, and it doesn't seem easy for the captain, or even a more severe moralist, to suggest a less objectionable programme for these youthful mariners. Of

course we can see how they might have done better; but all that the captain said to them, at that time, was (placing a hand affectionately on each of their shoulders), "My sons, when you've got plenty of sea-room, there's no sense in hugging the shore; for there may be sunken reefs not down on the chart, you know."

"That's true, cap'n," the young man laughed. "But never fear, sir, we'll be round to the Snug Harbor next Sunday."

* * *

A poor fellow came to the captain one day complaining, with tears in his eyes, that he had lost all his money. He had just been paid off; met two "ladies" on the street who asked him to treat; accompanied them to a cellar-saloon and called for beer and oysters. The next thing he knew, he was out on the sidewalk nowhere in sight of that cellar, and without a penny in his pocket. How he got there, he couldn't tell; he supposed he must have been drugged. He admitted that he had no one to blame but himself, not even the "ladies"; but, all the same, he was hunting for that underground den, so as to find the man, and "bung his peepers."

"No, my son," said the captain; "that's no manner of use, and would only get you into more trouble. You've had to pay dear for your lesson, that's all, and instead of bugging his peepers, you'd better keep your own open in future, and never trust suspicious craft, no matter what flag they may fly at the peak. And let me tell you this, my son,—if you had put in here before cruising round town, you'd have most

likely had your money in your own pocket now instead of in that of somebody else."

* * *

One day two sailors got into a drunken brawl with some street-rowdies. The latter, of course, escaped, but the sailors were arrested and brought into the police-court. Captain Antle, hearing of the trouble, went and saw the men and learned from them that they had been articted to sail next day. Accordingly, when the judge sentenced them to a fine of ten dollars each, or thirty days in prison, the captain promptly paid the fines, — they having no money themselves, — and sent them on board their ship as soon as possible, so that they might not lose their berths.

Such little acts of kindness, the captain never mentioned to anyone, and it was very seldom they ever got into the papers. Except for the consciousness of having done what he considered "the right thing," the captain reaped no other reward. I should never, probably, have known of this particular affair, had I not been informed of it by one of those very sailors, who, on his return to the port, came to the mission and insisted on repaying the captain, not only for his own fine but for his companion as well, who had left the ship in a foreign port. That is Jack, through and through, and the captain could scarcely have done the man's feelings greater injury than to have refused the money.

* * *

Two among the volunteer workers for the mission were women. At first, Mr. Watson was a little doubtful as to their

ability to contend with the trials and obstacles that would inevitably beset their path. The captain, on the contrary, had an intuitive belief in their efficiency, and the results proved the correctness of his judgment.

One of these ladies, a comely woman of about thirty years of age, had a little experience which may be related as a sample case. She entered a ship-chandler's store one day where several men, mostly in the sea-faring line, were spinning yarns with much noisy hilarity. Conversation ceased at her approach,—as, doubtless, it well might,—and half-a-dozen pairs of scrutinizing eyes were fixed on her. Handing the first man a tract, he took it and thanked her; the next accepted his silently, but the third man, a stout, middle-aged person, with his hat tipped insolently over his right eye, made a remark that cannot be here repeated, but which was so indelicate as really to shock the rest. The young woman, without being at all disconcerted, looked the fellow steadily in the face, and asked him, in a firm but gentle tone of voice,

“Are you a father, sir?”

“Oh, yes! I'm a father,” he grunted.

“And have you a daughter?”

“Two of 'em.”

“And would you care to have any man make the remark to either of them that you have just made to me?”

The fellow was crushed, and made no reply. In profound silence, she finished the distribution of her tracts, and then gracefully withdrew, having taught these men a lesson they doubtless did not speedily forget.

A young sailor, having been fatally injured by a fall from the yard-arm of his ship, was taken to the hospital unconscious. After about an hour, the poor fellow opened his eyes and soon seemed to realize his position. The doctor asked him if he knew where he was.

"Yes; in the hospital."

"Do you feel much pain?"

"No, not much; a little stiff, that's all. Am I hurt badly, doctor?"

"Well, you've had a pretty bad shaking, that's a fact, and I should think you might feel a little stiff. Is there anyone you'd like to see right away?"

The young man, evidently appreciating the reason for that question, gazed intently at the doctor a few seconds, and then asked, "Is it all over with me, doctor?"

"If there's anyone you'd like to see, you had better send for him at once," the surgeon replied, evasively.

The young man reflected awhile, and the cold sweat stood in beads on his forehead.

"I—I'd like to see Captain Antle," he said.

The captain was immediately sent for, and reached the couch of the injured man in less than an hour. He had not heard of the accident before, or he would have been on hand sooner, and that without a message.

"Captain," said the dying youth, "I suppose I have got to lose the number of my mess. I've had a bad shaking, the doctor says."

Captain Antle sat down, and tenderly holding the patient's hand, asked, "What can I do for you, my son?"

"Please, captain, I'd like you to take care of my chest and things till — till my mother sends for them."

"Who is your mother, my son?"

"Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, widow, Hartleport, England. My father was rector of St. —, in that town. I ran away to sea, shortly after he died, three years ago. — I was a bad boy, captain — a bad boy. — My poor mother. — I'd like you to write her, captain, please, and tell her I — I died hoping for her forgiveness — if I haven't already broken her heart."

"And, my son, you hope that your Heavenly Father will also grant you His forgiveness, don't you?"

After a moment's pause, the young man replied despondently, "Do you think I deserve that, captain?"

"No, my son, I do not indeed. We deserve only the wrath of God; but He is willing to forgive us all our sins, through the merits of Jesus Christ, if we ask Him in faith, nothing doubting."

Again the dying man reflected a moment, while a nurse wiped the moisture from his brow. Then, turning with a faint smile to the captain, he said, "If you'll only ask God to forgive me for the way I've treated my poor mother, I should be satisfied — that's all."

Still holding the young sailor's hand in both of his, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, the captain earnestly besought of the Heavenly Father to forgive and accept this repentant prodigal and take him to His bosom, for the Redeemer's sake.

"Thank you, sir," feebly answered the young man, who, falling into a comatose condition, said no more, and expired in about an hour after.

With Captain Antle and the ship's company of the deceased for mourners, the young sailor's body was buried from an Episcopal church; but no message ever crossed the ocean in reply to the captain's letter. Perhaps mother and son may have met on that shore where filial ingratitude is forgotten and all transgressions are blotted out forever.

* * *

That Captain Antle could be stern and even severe, when the occasion demanded, is shown by the following incident:

A poor careworn woman, accompanied by her little girl, came to him one evening, complaining bitterly that her husband had lost his berth as second mate of the brig *Elizabeth*, a coaster, and was now spending his time and money gambling and drinking, to the neglect of his family — a fact which was evident enough in their appearance.

"Have you told him that you were coming to see me?" the captain inquired.

"No, sir."

"Very well; say nothing to him about it, and I'll call round to-morrow morning."

Accordingly, after breakfast the following day, he was on hand. He found the unfortunate family occupying two small, half-furnished rooms in a miserable tenement on a filthy alley not far from Water Street. They had just partaken of their meagre meal, and the man was crouching over the

rusty stove, smoking his pipe; for it was a chilly day in March.

"Excuse me," said the captain, looking round without appearing to recognize the woman. "I guess, I've got into the wrong box. I was told that Mr. White lived here. But this can't be the place. Oh, no! it can't be."

"My name's White," muttered the man sulkily.

"I mean Mr. White, lately second mate of the brig Elizabeth."

"Well, that's me," White replied, knocking the ashes out of his pipe and looking up inquiringly.

"If that's the case," retorted the captain, "I'm sorry to say, Mr. White, that I can't be of any service to you. I'm Captain Antle. I understand you lost your berth. I meant to get you another; but now that I see the kind of man you are, I should not care to recommend you. No, sir, I should not," continued the captain, with flashing eyes and rising indignation. "You call yourself a man—an able seaman, and bring your wife and child into a place like this! You, a mate, and living like a pauper! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir! You're a disgrace to the merchant-marine. You are not fit to swob the deck of a canal-boat! You're not fit to man a mud-scow! I see the kind of fellow you are, and why you lost your berth. You drink, you gamble, you loaf, you smoke all day long. You ill-use that poor wife of yours and her sweet innocent babe; and instead of getting you the job I intended, I'll have you posted in every shipping-office in the port as a drunkard and gambler, and

you'll never get another berth as long as you are round here." And the captain strode toward the door.

"Cap'n, see here, please," said White, shuffling across the floor. "Isn't that devilish tough on a fellow?"

His weeping wife, with the frightened child clinging to her ragged skirts, also put in her plea, sobbing that Jimmie meant to do better — she was sure he did.

"Very well; I'll tell you what," said Captain Antle in a relenting tone. "I know of a tenement half a mile from here that would just do you. If you move in there within a week, quit drinking, and come to the Snug Harbor, I'll see what can be done for you. Will you promise?"

"I will, by the living G ——"

"S—sh! No profanity!" interrupted the captain, sternly. "Come to the Snug Harbor on Water Street, and I'll see what I can do. Do you understand?"

"Yes, cap'n. When shall I come?"

"At ten o'clock this forenoon; and if I smell liquor on you, I'll dump you over like a dead dog."

"No fear, cap'n. That'll be all right," said White briskly, and looking ten times the man he did a few minutes before.

To make a long story short, White appeared at the room promptly, and rigged up in his best togs. He first signed the pledge, then went with the captain to his old shipping-office, and was soon articulated as mate in another brig to sail in a few days. The family moved into the new tenement, and White, I may here state, eventually rose to be captain, and finally retired a well-off and respected citizen.

A volume might easily be filled with such incidents, but these will suffice to show the extent of the field covered by the Water-street Mission and the nature of the work done in it.

It will be readily understood that the secret of Captain Antle's influence over men was in his placing himself on a level with them. He was their friend—their brother. He did not invite them to ascend to the heights on which he stood; but he led them to the foot of the Cross, there to seek that mercy and grace they each alike needed. And this was not assumed by him as “good policy”—as the best method of becoming an adroit “fisher of men.” It was not assumed at all—it was his normal attitude as he stood between his fellow mortals on the one hand and his Saviour on the other. His love for Jesus was the grand passion of his soul. Next to that, and because of it, was his love for his brother man. Like the molten lava, which licks up whole villages and stays not for break or barrier on its fiery course, so his zeal knew no limits, no obstacles, no class, no distinction; but was eager to assimilate all mankind and bring the whole world to Christ.

X.

SOMETIMES the captain was at his wit's end to know how to meet the increasing needs of the mission and contend with the surging waves of want and misery that flung themselves against his door. His heart was too large to turn any empty away; but the secret of the "loaves and fishes" had not yet been imparted to him, and the multitude had to remain unfed.

Among the captain's most efficient helpers, was an old Scotch sail-maker, one Sandy McGregor, who acted as janitor and general-utility man. One morning when the captain was lamenting the almost hopeless condition of the district, both morally and socially, and endeavoring to devise some way of remedying these evils, Sandy said, in his broad Highland dialect, —

"It's of no use, captain. You can do nothing for them. If you give them money, they'd spend it in drink; or clothes, they'd pawn them for drink; or whatever you do, would go the same way. You can neither feed them nor clothe them, nor anything else under the sun. It's like trying to fill a sieve with water. You cannot do it, captain. There's only one way I see out of it myself, and that is to hire a lot of old hulks, and to fill them with these miserable creatures, and tow them out to the middle of the ocean, and sink them out of sight. It would be more merciful in the long run than

letting them suffer, day in and day out, from sickness and nakedness and hunger, but more especially thirst. They'd have enough to drink for once in their lives at all events, though it might not be the kind of liquor they'd prefer."

And Sandy uttered this without the gleam of a smile on his lean visage, although, of course, he meant it as a grim sort of joke. But the captain, who was in no mood for jesting and not much of a humorist anyway, exclaimed, "O Sandy, that's horrible! But, of course, you don't mean it. No, we must try if we can't find some better way than that, my good brother."

"Well, captain, they've been trying to find it ever since the world began, and they've no hit upon it yet, I'm thinking."

And it must be confessed that the canny Scot was not so far out of the way after all.

But the Water-street Mission had one friend who stood by it from the beginning, Isaac Buckminster. Few people were aware how much Mr. Buckminster did to benefit the community of which he was an honored member. Calm, methodical, reticent, judicious, Mr. Buckminster's benefactions were not so much the result of sudden impulse as of careful consideration. Once assured that a cause, or even an individual, needed his assistance, Mr. Buckminster acted in the spirit of that proverb which says, "He gives twice who gives soonest."

As employers, Messrs. Buckminster, Beals, and Company were good people to work for. Not that they paid exorbitant salaries or were disposed to overlook remissness and in-

efficiency on the part of their employees. On the contrary, they were considered unusually strict and not over liberal; but they were fair to all, and treated every person, from highest to lowest, with due consideration and respect. To be honorably discharged from their employ, was a good-enough recommendation for any man; and hence this house was an excellent one to graduate from. George Antle had long been in their service; first, as mate, afterwards as captain, and not another of their men, in spite of his well-known and deplorable infirmities of temper, commanded greater respect or was more trusted than he. And this for very good reasons — he was an able seaman in every sense of the word; honest, conscientious, and careful, never having lost a vessel, seldom a man, and rarely the profits of the voyage. Of course, the firm was naturally sorry to lose his services; but after he had given up the sea for the mission, seldom a week passed that he was not in conference with his old employers — even when the captain's name had become a household-word.

It is scarcely possible that Mr. Buckminster, or anyone else for that matter, could have foreseen what the Water-street Mission would eventually become. He may have surmised that, after a time, the captain would recover from his "craze," and return to his old avocation, a sadder and a wiser man — return with all his efficiency as a master-mariner, but without that infirmity of temper which made him such a terror to all and such a thorn in the side of the firm. One day, when the captain paid his customary visit to his

friend and patron, Mr. Buckminster took occasion to state that, after mature reflection on the affairs of the mission, and after having consulted with several prominent individuals who had at heart the success of the work and also due consideration for Captain Antle's physical ability to sustain such a burthen without assistance, he, (Mr. Buckminster) had arrived at the conclusion that the mission should cease to be conducted on an independent basis, and be brought under the control of the Church.

The reasons for this decision, Mr. Buckminster stated in terms so concise, so clear, so forcible, and yet so considerate, that a far less obtuse understanding than Captain Antle's could not have failed to comprehend and appreciate them.

It was a thunder-bolt out of a clear sky, the effect of which was that, for the first time in years, the captain's spirit was cast down within him, his sunshine obscured, and when he left the office, it was with a sad and troubled heart. It meant much to him. It meant infinitely more than a shock to the financial interests of the mission. It meant a departure from those broad principles on which the mission had been hitherto conducted, and a narrowing of base which would seem to leave him but little room wherein to labor.

As the captain felt and thought, so he spoke and acted. He gave Mr. Buckminster to understand that, while he had the greatest reverence and affection for the Church, as founded and ordained by Christ the Lord—the spiritual, universal Church of Christ—he could not and would not be hampered or controlled by any form of ecclesiasticism whatever.

His parish was the world, and his people all who needed a Saviour. The question of "Church-relationships" had never been raised in the mission. It was enough to know that those who came to them were human beings, with all the needs and frailties of humanity. It was enough to know that they were laboring and heavy-laden with sins and miseries, and that Christ alone could give them rest. Here was a platform on which all creeds, all classes, all nations could stand, and on which, whatever other doctrines they may or may not profess, they may be sure of Salvation, through the cross of Christ.

"No, Mr. Buckminster," said the captain, in conclusion; "I must be free — free in thought, free in creed, free in methods, free in action. I must be untrammelled, or I can do nothing among such people as crowd our room. God has been with us. God has greatly blessed and prospered us, yea, beyond our hopes and expectations. The mission can stand on its own base, for it is as wide as the world; and, God helping me, it will stand as a witness for Him so long as he gives me life and strength to do the work appointed me."

Though spoken with even more than the captain's usual buoyancy and earnestness, he very well knew that Mr. Buckminster's mind had been fully made up in reference to the matter, and that a change of some sort was inevitable as regarded the future of the mission.

When next I met Captain Antle, I was alarmed to notice a change in his appearance. His step had lost much of its elasticity, and there was in his face an expression of care,

fatigue, and even discouragement, that I had never seen in it before. For the first time since his memorable accident, I felt compelled to inquire after the state of his health. The captain's reply was as surprising to me as it was painful.

"My dear friend," he said, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. I suppose, Charles, that if I conferred with flesh and blood, I should be on my bed; for I need rest. But the Lord bids me labor on, hope on; and so I must be about my Master's business. Charles, there is a cloud on the horizon — no bigger, at present, than a man's hand; but it may grow and cover the whole heavens at last. Nevertheless, God is behind the cloud. You and I had a little talk once, if you remember, in reference to Church-connection. You seemed to think it would greatly relieve my labors and be for the best interests of the mission, if placed under the control of the Church. Monied men would have more confidence in it, you thought. Well, Charles, I pondered and prayed over the question many days and many weeks, and came to the conclusion that it would never, never do for me to be trammelled or hampered in any way, shape, or form, — that I needed no Master but the Lord and no guidance but the Holy Spirit. I settled the matter in my own mind, dismissed all further thought about Church-connection, and went on my way rejoicing. So it has been going along till the other day, when my good old friend, Brother Buckminster, put the case to me in such a shape that there seems to be no getting away from it. Now, Charles, it has come to this — I must do one of two things. I must either cut adrift

from Brother Buckminster — and you know what that means — or I must do violence to my principles and my strongest convictions. So, Charles, you see I am in a strait betwixt two, and I am only waiting now for the Lord to help me decide. The Lord knows what I most desire — what I believe is best for the mission ; but whether, after all, it be the Lord's will or not, He must reveal to me in a more unmistakable way than I have yet seen."

Here, then, was the secret of that disturbed condition of mind which betrayed itself so conspicuously on his countenance and in his whole bearing. I was extremely sorry. I knew how objectionable to his strong, independent nature was any alliance that would curb his liberty of action or limit his field of operation. Long ago, I ceased to urge, or even mention, any such arrangement. Few could properly comprehend Captain Antle's views, still fewer, perhaps, quite coincide with him. There is no denying that, in many respects, he was a peculiar person, to say the least, and belonged to that very small class who refuse to be harnessed to any conventional plough or commonplace wagon, whose implements are of their own devising, as well as their methods of using them, and who, if they work at all, work neither in my way nor your way, but only in their own way.

Personally, I could have wished that this crisis had not happened just when it did ; for I was about to inform the captain of an event in the near future which would sever our intimate connection and, consequently, forbid my rendering him any longer that little assistance which it had been in my

power to give. It must be confessed that the captain, in spite of his genial disposition and easy friendship with all sorts and conditions of people, was a very lonely man, even for a bachelor. And as almost everyone needs some confidential friend, it seemed to do him good to unbosom himself to me, both in his trials and his triumphs. In this way I was probably more useful to him than in any other; and for this reason I kept postponing the "evil day," when I should have to inform him of what was so rapidly approaching.

From the hour he left his English home, a poor motherless boy, even to this of his mature manhood, George Antle was alone in the world. Thrown thus early on his own resources, there was developed in him a spirit of self-reliance and a marked independence of character that seemed to place him above the need of companionship. But, nevertheless, there were times and seasons when his loneliness appeared to force itself most pathetically on his mind, being all the more touching from the nature of its manifestation. Among the favorite pieces he delighted to have me read to him was Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," and the lines that seemed to affect him most were those which so vividly portray the loneliness of a solitary human soul: —

" Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea;
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony."

This he would repeat after me in an undertone, his eyes suffused with tears, and his hand keeping time to the rhythm

of the verse. Not that the captain ever intimated a parallel between himself and the lonely old mariner, or uttered any querulous or morbid complaints whatever, — his sympathy seemed to be wholly for that strange man with the glittering eye and skinny hand; nevertheless, as I could easily divine the secret of his heart, I felt a pity for him which I dared not express.

XI.

THAT was my last interview with Captain Antle, previous to leaving the port and taking up my residence in a distant part of the country. But, as I still felt a lively interest in the Water-street Mission, I obtained from Mr. Watson the promise of keeping me in touch with its affairs; so that the concluding chapters of this little work will be made up, for the most part, of extracts from his correspondence.

What rendered this information especially desirable to me at that time was that I had left the captain in an agitated state of mind concerning Church-connection, and the Mission on the eve of an impending crisis. Consequently, I felt no little anxiety to learn the upshot, knowing well that a change of some kind was inevitable.

So long as the captain believed that his independent attitude towards the Church was best for the Mission, he would surely persist in it, despite all arguments to the contrary; but just so soon as anything occurred to give him a doubt as to his position, he would begin to "take his bearings," as he used to say, and, if convinced that he was steering wrong, shift his course at once. I was sure of this. His stubbornness lasted only so long as he believed himself to be in the right.

Thus far, the Mission had gone on smoothly and well; but I was convinced that, sooner or later, circumstances

must arise which would bring the Church question to the front in a way that could not be ignored or put aside. It must, sooner or later, give the captain no little anxiety and trouble.

That the Mission had its distinctive work and place, was obvious enough; but that it could supply the place of the Church in all respects was, of course, out of the question. If only as regards certain every-day rites and functions, so to speak, this fact must be evident or would be made evident in the course of time.

This I had previously anticipated; but whenever I touched on the subject to the captain, he pooh-poohed the suggestion as a matter of the most trifling importance.

"What more, Charles, can a Church do for a man," he used to contend, "than help to save his soul? And if all their rites and ceremonies fail in that, then what's the good of them? It's an awful thing to trifle with a man's salvation! No, Charles, the churches may be all very well for people in Sunday clothes and kid gloves; but for my poor boys, the Mission is the only place. Here they feel at home, and know that they are welcome."

This was his conclusive argument, and, as we have seen, not even his most influential friend and patron, Mr. Buckminster, could effect any change in his position.

But the change did come at last, and that not of the captain's seeking so much as through what may well be termed a series of object-lessons — a succession of incidents and experiences which, thrown in the scales just when they trembled

in the balance, resulted in a most decided preponderance in favor of all that the captain had hitherto opposed. It resulted, indeed, as he himself expressed it, in his "second conversion"—a process which Mr. Watson clearly unfolds to us in the following pages.

* * *

. . . The captain is still in a very troubled state of mind with regard to the Church question, circumstances arising almost every day which force the subject on his attention *nolens volens*. Having never himself been connected with a Church, and meeting with what he considers rather chilling receptions whenever he had ventured inside one, he has hitherto regarded the Church in no very friendly light; and as neither Mr. Buckminster nor myself deem it prudent to present the case too urgently or too frequently, lest he might think we were simply attempting to proselytize him, the captain is evidently not enjoying that peace and assurance which once irradiated his countenance and gave such unction to his utterances. He is waiting for divine illumination and guidance.

It is certainly to be hoped that this will soon be vouchsafed him, and in such an unmistakable way that our good brother will no longer be hampered with doubt and hesitancy on a question concerning which there is really no need of such a state of mind.

But, of course, every allowance must be made for a man who has spent the greater portion of his life outside the pale of civilization, one may almost say—certainly, where the

sound of the church-going bell seldom or ever reached his ear, and when it did, it was not to call forth any sympathetic response from his soul.

The Church never sought after him, so far as he was aware; nor cared for him, so far as he knew; nor was it in the Church that he found his Saviour. It was in the chamber of affliction, and through the humble ministrations of his aged nurse. This, I think, sufficiently explains the captain's attitude toward the Church and her sacred ordinances — an attitude, which, I feel convinced, must soon demonstrate itself to be false and injurious.

* * *

. . . The other day an intelligent sailor, who has recently been attending our meetings, asked the Captain if the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in the Mission-room or would it be necessary for him to go to some church to participate in the rite — the young man being a member of the Methodist church and a stranger.

Simple as this question was, it has caused the captain no little agitation of mind. He has never partaken of the Holy Sacrament, of course; believing, as he does, that the Lord's injunction to the apostles at the Last Supper — "This do in remembrance of me" — was not meant to institute a special ceremony, needing the intervention of a clergyman; but that each and every meal should be made the occasion of remembering the Saviour. With this as his settled conviction hitherto, you can readily understand why the young man's inquiry should have set our good brother to thinking. And,

doubtless, you will be as interested as myself to know the result of his cogitations.

* * *

. . . Yesterday the captain was closeted with Mr. Buckminster for over an hour, and when he came out and passed through the office, he appeared to be considerably agitated, so I was informed by your old friend Mr. Thomas. On the morning previous (Monday) the captain and I got into a discussion on the Church question, when he appeared to be more open to conviction on the subject than ever I had known him before. He was willing to admit that church-fellowship must be a great help to a person in many ways; but he feared the tendency was toward narrowness and bigotry.

"It is man and not God who builds churches. It is man and not God who fences off Christendom into acre-lots; and why are not the people on the other side of the fence just as good as I? They can't be all right and yet all different; and who is to tell which *is* right?"

You, as a Churchman, would have no hesitation, perhaps, in giving the captain a plain and positive answer to this question; but from my standpoint it was not easy to do so — that is, in that direct, categorical way he insists on being answered. So I reminded him that so far as the essential doctrines were concerned, all Christians were in harmony; but it was only on the minor and non-essential points wherein they differed. It was natural that those who were most in accord with one another should affiliate. We all can't think alike on every point, and it was better for a man to avow and con-

fess his faith among those who agreed with him than to conceal it among those who differed from him. In other words, it was better to be an honest man than a hypocrite.

"Here is a large family of children," I said. "They all love and obey the one father; but each child may have a different way of manifesting its affection and obedience. The essential thing is filial love; the non-essential, the manner of showing it."

This argument, though neither very profound nor original, seemed to strike the captain somewhat forcibly.

"Yes, Mr. Watson," he assented, "that's true — that's good! If we only love the Lord Jesus, it matters little about the rest. Loyal to the King! Loyal to the King! If we can't all sail in the same ship, we can all fight in the same fleet."

* * *

. . . The captain has been making inquiry among those who come to our meetings, as to their former church-relationship, if they had any, and was not a little surprised to discover that so many of them, in their early years, were in the habit of attending religious services. He found that quite a number were sons of church-going parents; but who, when they began to follow the sea, drifted away farther and farther from the associations as well as the restraints of the Christian life, until, wherever they were, the Church was the last thing that entered their minds.

In many cases, the captain was the first person, who for years had ever broached the subject of religion to these men;

and yet they traded between the sea-ports of professedly Christian countries! What a comment is this on our zeal for the Master!

But the point which has given Captain Antle most concern is that nearly all of these men associate religion with "church-attendance." They deplore the fact that they have not been "inside a church" for years; but resolve that in future, wherever they may be, they should try and find some "place of worship" to attend.

While the captain could not but approve most heartily this resolution on the part of the men, he was troubled to decide whether it was not his duty to urge them to find some "place of worship" *now*, while in the port. Evidently, they did not consider the Mission-room a "place of worship," in the strict sense of the word; and if not, then whither should he direct them?

A few cases of this kind coming up has had the effect of exercising the captain's mind to such an extent that he is considering whether it would not be a good idea to try and make some arrangement with the nearest churches to have them set apart pews for sailors, so that "the boys" would be sure of finding accommodation. He thinks of submitting the question to a committee of clergymen of various denominations, if such a *synod* can be convened.

* * *

. . . The recent death and burial of a young sailor (see p. 91) has had a singular effect on the captain's mind. The deceased having been a son of a Church-of-England clergy-

man, the funeral services were held in the Episcopal Church. So profoundly was the captain impressed with the ritual that he at once procured a prayer-book and has been studying it ever since. He keeps the little volume in his pocket, so as to have it by him at all times. I naturally supposed that it was the matchless power, beauty, pathos, and phraseology of the services which especially pleased him; but it seems that what has given him most food for thought with regard to the book is that so large a body of professing Christians should consider such rites, ceremonies, and ordinances essential to the worship of God and the salvation of the soul.

"Mr. Watson," he said to me the other day, holding up the prayer-book, "if this is the right way to worship God, then you and I are wrong; but if our way is right, then they are wrong. Now which is it? That's what's puzzling me just now. Have you ever thought of it?"

"Do you mean as to the question of a ritual for public worship?" I asked him.

"I mean as to the use of a prayer-book," he replied.

"Well, as for myself," I said, "I see less objection to the prayer-book than to most of the extemporaneous prayers that are offered. Certainly, no prayers could be better expressed than those in the book or more amply cover all the needs and conditions of life."

"That may be very true, Mr. Watson," the captain returned; "but if a beggar came to your door for a meal of victuals to keep him from starving and read what he had to say to you out of a book, what would you think of him?"

“As an individual case, captain, I should think the man was a humbug; but if I were a governor or mayor, and a man came and read a petition to me signed by four or five hundred other men, I should feel bound to give it serious consideration; all the more serious, because it expressed the desire of so many others. So these prayers express the needs of hundreds and thousands, and if the one who utters them is not earnest and sincere, then it is the fault of the man and not the book. God hears it all the same, and knows every soul of which it *is* the expression.”

As this seemed to place the question in a new light to his mind, he reflected a moment, and then, with a beaming countenance, exclaimed,

“Brother Watson, let us thank the Lord that He may be worshiped with a prayer-book!”

But undoubtedly what most exercises the captain’s mind is not the church-service of the prayer-book so much at its bewildering variety of rites, ceremonies, sacraments, rituals, rubrics, canons, creeds, catechisms, articles — in a word, that complex ecclesiasticism which appears so absolutely essential to the Christian faith — to simple *faith in Christ*.

That all this seems to point one way, namely, *to the Church*, appeals to such an idiosyncrasy as Captain Antle’s with powerful effect. He must be sure of the truth before he can take another step; hence his unsettled and, I fear, unhappy state of mind just at present.

* * *

I never saw the captain when he was in a more depressed

condition than last Sunday morning when he came into the Mission-room.

"I am sure I don't know what to tell our boys to-day," he said with a sigh. "I feel like telling them to go to the churches—to the holy and consecrated houses of God. That our poor room here is not the proper place in which to worship God. That it is not a church and can never stand for a church; but only a place to meet each other and do the best we can for one another. . . . And yet," he continued, after reflecting a moment, "where can they go? Yes, where *can they go?* No! It would break my heart, after all, to see my poor boys get up and turn their backs on me. Oh, it would, it would! Wandering off, like sheep without a shepherd! Turned away from home! I know what it is to be turned away from home! No! No! God help me! I can't—I won't do it!" Then jumping up and shaking his "mane" like a lion, his eyes aflame and his fists clenched, he exclaimed, "With God's help, I'll gather them around me, and we'll fight for Jesus to the last! Yes, here in this blessed room? And we'll stand by the ship till she sinks beneath us!"

So the clouds passed, and I never heard the captain when he was more powerful in prayer and exhortation than he was that day. It seemed as if a double measure of the divine spirit had been given him; and so large and grand were his utterances, so firm was his grasp of divine truth, that all questions of mere rites and rituals sank into insignificance. For the time-being, our poor Mission-room seemed indeed the house of God and the gate of heaven!

XII.

ON Friday evening last, a remarkable event occurred in the shape of a visit from Mr. Grey, rector of the church in which the funeral services of the young sailor were held. Mr. Grey came in during the singing of a hymn, and took a back seat; but no sooner did the captain spy him out than he hurried down, took him by the arm, and insisted on his coming up on the platform.

"You know, friends," the captain said, "the Bible tells us that in receiving strangers, we may entertain angels unawares. This evening the good Lord has sent us, if not one of his angels, certainly one of his chosen ministers — a minister of the grand old mother-church, God bless her! I have no doubt, lads, but he brings a message from aloft to us down here below, to which we shall now give heed with all our hearts and souls."

The clergyman, thus introduced, began by saying that he had not anticipated making any remarks when he entered the room, and though it was the first time he had ever been inside their door, yet he was by no means a stranger to the good work of the Mission; for its light was such that it could not be hidden under a bushel — it was a beacon that all might behold.

Captain Antle, he said, referred to him as a minister of the Church, charged with a divine message. That expresses

concisely and truly, the privilege and the duty of every clergyman—he comes, or *should* come, with a message from on High—a message, too, that should have no uncertain sound—the message which Christ gave His disciples in the beginning, and which has been the sacred trust of the Church all through the ages, namely, that it is only through the Door that entrance can be had to the sheepfold, that Door being Christ himself.

It is through faith in Christ, then, that we can alone find entrance to the sheepfold. Faith, if true and vital, manifests itself by works, otherwise it is dead. It manifests itself by obedience to the will of Christ. “If ye love me,” He said, “keep my commandments.” By which He implied much more than merely keeping the commandments of the decalogue, so called. He implied conformity to His injunctions as to teaching, preaching, baptizing, and administering the Holy Communion, which have been the peculiar offices and functions of the Church, from that day to this.

Christ is the Door of the sheepfold; that sheepfold is the Church militant, which is one with the Church triumphant. It is, therefore, through Christ's visible Church that entrance is had to the kingdom of heaven.

The message, then, which he (the speaker) would bring them was that while the work of the Mission was, doubtless, blessed in leading sinners to repentance and helping them to maintain a foothold in the pathway of duty and of right living, it must fall short of its highest and holiest privileges, if it did not lead penitents to that fold of which our blessed

Saviour was the Door; for, be it remembered, only "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."

This is a very imperfect outline of Mr. Grey's address; but you may gather from it what an effect it must have had on the captain, in his present susceptible and inquiring state of mind. In fact, it completely bewildered him, and while the rest seemed to be pleased and edified with the rector's message, its effect on the captain was to plunge him deeper than ever into the cloud of uncertainty.

Of course, the captain thanked Mr. Grey cordially and begged that he would favor them again before long; but the next morning he told me that he had scarcely slept a wink all night, and that he should have no peace till he had had a more satisfactory explanation from the clergyman as to one or two points in his address.

"Why, Mr. Watson," he said, "that message of his almost seemed like giving one the choice of serving the Lord or serving Baal. . . It will never do. I must have this thing settled one way or the other, please God, or I shall go crazy!"

* * *

. . . The captain has had his desired interview with Mr. Grey, and insisted on my accompanying him—I suppose, to help him, if possible, to a better understanding of the case, on the principle that two heads are better than one. The result, however, is, unfortunately, that he is more in the dark than ever!

Almost the first question he asked the rector was, if he believed every one outside the Episcopal Church would be lost! Of course, Mr. Grey absolutely repudiated any such belief, and replied, "Certainly not, Captain Antle! God forbid that I should limit His infinite mercies or pronounce as to who shall or shall not be saved."

"But don't you believe, sir, that membership in *some* Christian Church is necessary to salvation?"

"I believe, Captain Antle, that the one thing necessary to salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus."

"Then, after all, you and I agree perfectly!" exclaimed the captain. "Faith in the Lord Jesus—nothing more; for *that* includes all. Nothing can come between me and my Redeemer. Nothing more is needed—no sacrifice, no priest, no rites, no ceremonies. Belief in the Lord Jesus saved me, saved you, saved all who have gone to glory. Am I right or am I wrong? A poor ignorant sailor comes to you for instruction."

"You are quite right, Captain Antle, in saying, in effect, that Christ is our all-sufficient sacrifice, acceptance of which with all our heart, soul, and mind is conditional to salvation. But while we are living here on earth, we are a union of body and spirit—we have two natures, a spiritual and a physical. So it is with the Church—it is spiritual and material, or visible and invisible. While, then, our souls are united with the invisible and spiritual Church, our bodies naturally come in unison with the visible Church on earth.

"Indeed, this is almost the only evidence we can give

mankind of our faith — it is that confession of Christ before men, which is conditional to his confession of us before the angels in heaven.

“That certain rites and sacraments of the Church were ordained by Christ himself in the very beginning must be admitted by all who are familiar with the gospel narrative. They are simple matters of fact, not of doctrine or opinion.

“The sacrament of baptism, for instance, was ordained by Him as a sign of regeneration, or new-birth, whereby they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; and so with the sacrament of the Lord’s supper — it is a sign of our redemption by Christ’s death.

“These rites have been considered essential by Christians in all ages — essential, that is, in the sense of conformity with Christ’s special injunction to the primitive Church; and whatever other changes have been wrought in the policy, the ritual, the creed, the government, or usages of the Church, no change has ever displaced the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist.”

This was not exactly the line of argument I expected, or rather desired, that Mr. Grey would take; for, in emphasizing the Church and her rites and ceremonies, I felt that instead of satisfying, he was only still further disturbing the captain’s mind. Accordingly, I was not at all surprised when he interrupted Mr. Grey by demanding with considerable agitation,

“Then, sir, you consider that it is essential to my salvation that I should join the Episcopal Church?”

"Oh no, Captain Antle!" Mr. Grey replied. "I won't say that. I don't insist on that, by any means. But, of course, as a minister of that Church, I hold and teach, and must hold and teach, so long as I am loyal to that Church, as well as true to my own convictions, that the sacraments as administered by her, and rightly, worthily, and faithfully received by the participants, are in stricter harmony with apostolic usage than as administered in any other communion."

"But, still, sir, you don't go so far as to say that God will not bless those sacraments if faithfully received in any other Christian church?"

"Not at all; it is not for me to say — it is not for any man to say what relationships may exist between the creature and the Creator — between the soul and her God — between the Heavenly Father and his earthly child.

"No man can be condemned for acting according to the light that is in him; only he must be sure, if possible, that he has the *true* light, not a deceptive one — not a false light.

"You, sir, as a navigator, know that the safest way to reach the desired haven, is to sail by compass and chart. It is quite possible you may reach the port by some other channel than that indicated on your chart; but it is certainly not wise to run the risk.

"As a minister of the Church, I am guided by the chart and compass entrusted to me for my direction. I feel it incumbent on me to teach and to preach according to the light that is in me and to administer the sacraments accord-

ing to the injunction handed down to me from age to age, through the apostolic Church, in all her trials and triumphs, her martyrdoms and persecutions, her defections and corruptions, her weakness and her strength, reaching up to the sacred person of her Founder, even Christ Jesus, my Lord and Redeemer.

“So that, while I dare not say that the holy sacraments as administered to other bodies of professing Christians by good and worthy men are not edifying to the participants and acceptable in the sight of God, I do firmly believe and hold that there can be no doubt whatever of their divine acceptability and spiritual benefit as administered in our apostolic communion; that is to say, in the Episcopal Church.”

“Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!” enthusiastically exclaimed the captain grasping Mr. Grey’s hand. “You have done your best, my good brother, to enlighten my poor soul, and I dare say it’s all plain enough to any one who has a head to understand it; but for my part, sir, I’m as much adrift as ever, and would much rather you’d have told us that all inside the Church were saved and all outside lost — then I’d know where I was. . . . Mr. Watson,” he continued turning abruptly to me, “can you make anything out of it?”

“Well, captain,” I replied, “I think I understand Mr. Grey’s position pretty well; but as perhaps we have already occupied too much of his time, I’ll endeavor to explain it as well as I can on our way back to the Mission-room.”

Though kindly urged by the clergyman to prolong the

interview, we soon took our departure and walked for some distance without exchanging scarcely a word, the captain being wrapt in profound meditation. At length, when we reached an eminence which overlooked a large section of the town, he halted, and pointing with his finger, counted,

"One, two, three, four, five, six — six church spires can be seen from this. That means six churches — all different and yet, in their own estimation, all right — all orthodox! Now, Mr. Watson, that *can't be possible — can't be possible!* Only *one* of them can be right; and yet, though each claims to be right, is there *one* of them that would dare to say that the *only gate to heaven* is through *her* door?"

"Yes, captain," I answered, "one of them makes that claim — the Roman Catholic Church does."

"She does!" exclaimed the captain. "Then I respect her for it! That's business! What's the use of a finger-post that don't point anywhere in particular? What's a pilot worth who's not sure of his course? Yes, Mr. Watson; if the Catholic Church makes that claim, I respect her for it; though she may be mistaken, after all. Yes, she may be mistaken."

"Yes, captain; I'm fully persuaded that she *is* mistaken in making any such arrogant claim as that. She has no higher authority for making it than any other branch of the Christian Church. The Bible is our only rule of faith — the only revelation from God to man. What is not found between the lids of the Bible is not worth consideration — not worth the paper it is written on. It is only tradition, hear-

say, old wives' fables, superstition. The religion of Christianity is in the Bible and the Bible only — the religion of Protestants, at all events; and even Mr. Grey, with all his high-churchism, dares not go outside the record, however much he may feel inclined to do so. No, captain. No Church has a right to claim infallibility or an exclusive monopoly of the Truth."

"Then, Mr. Watson, what in the world are the Churches for? What is the use of them? . . . I was disappointed with Mr. Grey, poor soul. I suppose he did the best he could; but he failed to answer my question; that is, to my satisfaction. We must pray over this matter. . . . I feel, somehow, that the Lord is leading me among the breakers. I suppose it is to try my faith. But I'll grasp His hand all the tighter, till the day dawns, and then all will be plain sailing, I hope."

XIII.

ON Wednesday evening, a sailor, whom we had never seen before, made his appearance in the Mission-room, accompanied by a young woman. Although they took a back seat, it was not long before everyone in the room became aware of their presence, and many curious and searching glances were cast in the direction of the couple, who sat quietly and modestly enough, apparently interested in the exercises. So they remained till the close of the meeting, when what should they do but walk forward and request the captain to marry them!

"Why, bless your sweet souls!" exclaimed the captain, taken greatly by surprise, "I can't marry you. I'm neither a minister nor a justice of the peace; but, perhaps, Mr. Watson here can help you out."

They looked very much disappointed, especially the poor girl, who could scarcely refrain from crying, and was evidently not a little ashamed of the situation.

Observing this, the captain took them one side and questioned them closely but considerately as to the step they were anxious to take, and cautioned them to be sure that they understood the nature and obligations of the marriage relationship, before entering into it.

The result being satisfactory to the captain, he asked me to take them to Mr. Grey or to my own pastor, Mr. Carter,

and see that they were legally united. As the latter is the nearer, I conducted them to his house, and finding him in his study, the pair were very soon made one, and sent away grateful and happy.

Next day the captain said to me, "Well, Mr. Watson, how about those two poor foolish creatures? Did you find someone to marry them?"

"Oh, yes! I took them to Mr. Carter, and remained to witness the ceremony. They appeared to be all right."

"I hope so, Mr. Watson, I hope so; but I have my doubts—I have my doubts! And, by the way, speaking of your Mr. Carter, I must see him some day. I must have a talk with him."

The following evening I saw Dr. Carter and apprised him of Captain Antle's intention, and also gave him an inkling of the problems which were perplexing the captain's mind, so that, in a measure, he might be prepared for the visit. I say, in a measure; because, as you are aware, the captain's questions are apt to be as startling and unexpected as they are difficult to answer.

* * *

... Yesterday forenoon we called on Dr. Carter, whom Captain Antle met for the first time. After some conversation about the Mission, the captain asked,—

"Mr. Carter, do you believe that church-membership is necessary for salvation?"

"Well no, captain, not if you mean merely association with any particular body of professing Christians."

"Then what is the need of church-membership?"

"I don't think it is a question of *need*, Captain Antle, so much as one of *expediency*. You can *do* more good and *get* more good by fellowship, by mutual help and encouragement, by fraternally bearing one another's burdens, and unitedly laboring in the same cause, than by laboring alone — without friendly advice, help, or sympathy. Two heads are better than one; how much better must be two hundred or two thousand heads — hands — hearts — each supplementing, assisting, stimulating the other — all enlisted beneath the same banner — all advancing towards the same great and glorious end!"

"That's very true, Mr. Carter — very true and very reasonable; but you don't believe it's necessary to salvation?"

"Not at all. No Church has authority to set up that claim. No Protestant Church dares to do so. A man may never have gone inside the door of a church and yet be received into glory. Church-membership is so far from being conditional to salvation, that I fear there are multitudes of church-members who are further from the kingdom than many who have no connection with any visible Church whatever.

"And yet I maintain that it is better, safer, more expedient for a believer to unite with those of like faith than to stand alone and apart. Besides, affiliation is the natural and instinctive tendency. We are naturally drawn towards those of like faith with ourselves. Similarity of sentiment and purpose tends to unity. Love attracts — makes the many one.

‘How these Christians love one another!’ was the wonder of the pagan world. They were not ashamed of Christ. They were not afraid, even in view of persecution and martyrdom, to acknowledge Christ and to unite themselves openly with His followers.

“What is union with the Church to-day, but making open profession of Christ—showing all the world just where we stand—confessing Christ before men? And, although, on account of its human element, no Church is perfect, no creed universally acceptable, it is better, in my opinion, to ally ourselves with even the feeblest, I was about to say, most heretical of Churches, rather than with no Church at all.”

“Mr. Carter,” the captain exclaimed, “you needn’t say another word. You’ve taken, bless the Lord, a great load off my mind! Church-membership is not essential to the soul’s salvation; but it’s advisable, nevertheless, though somewhat a matter of choice. I think I understand it now, as I never did before; and so far as I am concerned, I see my way clear, thank God! But, sir, here’s the question. How about the Mission? For myself, I can make my choice, with the help of the Lord. I can join your church or any other, as I please, or as the Lord directs. But, Mr. Carter, is there any church that has a net large enough and strong enough to gather in all the fish that float into the Water-street Mission?”

“Well, no; perhaps not, Captain Antle,” Dr. Carter replied with a smile. “Not in the sense of uniting and organizing them into one body, subscribing to one creed, and

conforming to one ecclesiastical code. And, yet, I am not so sure about that either. You know the gospel net was full of fishes good and bad."

"Yes, Mr. Carter; but the trouble is, our fish, whether good or bad, won't stay in the net—they can't! They're here to-day and gone to-morrow. They are poor wanderers and wayfarers. If they get a spark of religion, they have to try and keep it alive in their hearts wherever they go, with the devil and his angels grinning all around them.

"Ah! poor boys, what church is there for them? Many of them have no home even—no abiding-place—no temple—no tabernacle—nothing but their own poor trembling consciences.

"Ah no, Mr. Carter, it's no use my talking Church to them! I may point them to Him who can still the raging seas and wash the stains of sin out of their poor souls; but I can't point them to the Church. No, sir; that's out of the question."

"Captain Antle," the doctor replied, "nothing can be truer than that. You cannot, with any hope of practical results, talk Church to such gatherings as come to your Mission. All you can do is to point—to *lead* them rather, to the Saviour. Having found their Lord, they will, sooner or later, find His disciples—find His Church.

"But it is really not a question of presenting the claims or privileges of the Church to them all, as I take it,—it is simply this, would it be better for the Water-street Mission to be a recognized branch of the general mission-work of

the Church, rather than to continue independent and unrecognized? That seems to me to be the only point at issue.

"Now, simple recognition by the Churches need not interfere in the least with the present methods of conducting the Mission or affect, in any way, the functions of those engaged in the work; neither would it impose any creed, require any obligation, or dictate any plans other than those already in successful operation. It would place the Mission in line with all similar agencies for the evangelization of mankind, and yet allow it to be quite as independent and undenominational as it is now.

"The Water-street Mission would then have the endorsement of the Churches—it would sail under the common banner of the Cross, and still be as free to carry on its work in its own way as it is now.

"I know of nothing that can present any obstacle to this. No denomination, with the exception, possibly, of the Roman Catholics, could refuse to recognize the Water-street Mission; and I see no reason why immediate steps should not be taken in that direction, looking ultimately, perhaps, towards something of a more permanent and regularly organized character."

"You mean, I suppose, something in the nature of a Bethel—a Sailors' Church?" I asked.

"Yes," Mr. Carter replied. "A regular Society, or Church, if you will, though independent and undenominational."

"But do you think that such a thing can be brought about?" the captain eagerly inquired.

"I haven't a doubt of it, Captain Antle," the doctor answered.

"But first of all, I should have to join some Church myself?"

"You are not, then, a member of any Church at present?"

"No, sir; I am not."

"You were baptized, I presume?"

"Yes, sir; I was baptized in the Church of England; but I was never confirmed. My poor mother died when I was a small shaver, and as my father, poor man, never gave himself much concern about me or my religion, there the matter ended.

"No, sir; I was a child of the devil, till the Lord snatched me as a brand from the burning, bless His Holy Name! And from that day to this, all I have been trying to do is to bring sinners like myself to repentance—especially, my poor brother-sailors, who have no one to care for their souls.

"I have never given a thought to churches, or societies, or ministers—nothing but Christ and Him crucified. I haven't had time to think of anything else. The devil is so active, night and day, that we have to be hard at it all the time. While we're debating here, souls are rushing to perdition!

"We certainly need all the help we can have; for the harvest truly is great and the laborers are few, and if such

good, wise, and faithful brothers as you and Mr. Buckminster and Mr. Watson here think I can have more strength and grace given me for the Lord's work by joining a Church, then, please God, I'll join one as soon as possible, provided they'll let me fight the devil without gloves — I mean, in my own way. . . . Mr. Carter, what's to hinder our asking the Lord for instructions right here on the spot?"

The interview ended in one of the most extraordinary prayer-meetings I ever attended, and when the captain rose to his feet, he grasped our hands and, with a beaming countenance, exclaimed, "Bless the Lord, brethren, this is my *second conversion!*"

XIV.

IT is really not much to be wondered at that many people consider Captain Antle fanatical and even insane; for his realization of the spiritual life is so vivid and objective, that the beings which most of us regard as very nearly mythical, are as real and personal to his apprehension as you or I. He refers to them in quite as matter-of-fact a way as he does to us or any of his flesh-and-blood acquaintances, and so unites the spiritual and material—the seen and the unseen—both in thought and expression, that to one not familiar with the man, his remarks are often really startling.

It is this peculiarity, together with a passionate sense of gratitude to his Redeemer—a sense which impells him to a constant service, a relentless warfare—which gives to Captain Antle that striking individuality which separates him from the generality of professing Christians, and so leads many to doubt his sanity. His faith is *really* the evidence of things not seen—no conjecture, no mere half-assurance. He is as *really* surrounded by a cloud of spiritual witnesses as he is by suffering and perishing humanity!

I often fancy that Loyola must have been just such a personality—just such an incarnation of fiery zeal and spiritual belligerency. So was Luther, so was Wesley, so was Paul, so, indeed, were all the great witnesses and champions

of the Truth — men who grasped both worlds in their mighty embrace and stood out from the rest of mankind as marked and exceptional characters.

Regarding George Antle from this point of view, does it not seem almost incongruous to expect such a man to unite himself with a Church and conform to prudential rules and discipline! Does it not rather seem as if the Church should come to him and bring herself within the quickening influence of his living faith and ardent zeal?

And yet he is now humbly and earnestly preparing himself for membership. He is striving for all the light he can obtain, so as to take no false step in his upward march.

That it is his duty to ally himself with some body of professing Christians, he has now no doubt whatever; all that gives him any perplexity at present is as to which particular branch, or denomination, he had better connect himself. When he does make the decision, it will be the result, you may be sure, of what he shall consider divine guidance and illumination. No other inducements or motives can influence him in the least, except, possibly, as the course he takes, may affect his work in the Mission. . . . In the meantime, his old friend Mr. Buckminster is much pleased at the turn affairs have taken, and hopes, before long, to see the Mission fully in line with the other recognized agencies in the great evangelical work of the age.

* * *

. . . What strange experiences we have from time to time, at the Mission! — experiences and happenings which

might afford abundant material to the most sensational story-writer. Here is a specimen: —

One day last week a wild-looking man — a foreigner of some kind, a gipsy, perhaps, — rushed up to us, and, though his jargon was scarcely intelligible, contrived to intimate to the captain that he wished him to come immediately and baptize his dying infant.

Never before, I believe, was such a request made of the captain; nor, indeed, strange to say, had he himself ever in his life happened to be a witness of the ordinance.

"Why, my good man," said the captain, "I can't do it. I'm no priest or minister. I can't baptize."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" the poor fellow cried (but I shall not attempt to reproduce his broken English). "Yes, come for God's sake," grasping the captain's arm and looking up into his face with an expression of terrible earnestness. "My child will die and the devils will have her! Oh, come, come, come, for the love of God! She is dying — dying, and the devils will have her — my poor little child!" And he fairly quivered with fear and impatience.

"What had we better do about it, Mr. Watson?" the captain asked me anxiously. "I have no right to do such a thing — have I?"

"In extreme cases," I replied, "I believe it is allowable. It's not like marrying, you know. I think, in a case like this, it would be no harm to baptize the child. It would not be illegal, and would certainly make at least one poor soul happy."

"But I don't know what to do or say. I never saw a baptism in my life!" said the captain; then, turning to the poor trembling man, "Don't you think, my friend, you had better try and find some priest, some father?" he asked.

"I am the father!" pointing to himself.

"I mean, some priest to baptize the little one," the captain explained.

"Oh, no, no! You my priest. . . . My child no live one hour, and the devils will have her! . . . You good man. . . . You help me. . . . Come, for the love of God!" cried the man, tugging at the captain's sleeve. "Suppose she die before we come! Oh, my God, my God!"

"Mr. Watson," said the captain, "I think we'll have to go with him, and see what can be done. We can pray with them. The Lord will hear our prayers, at all events. You've seen baptisms, and know what is done. They dip them in water or sprinkle them, don't they?"

"Some dip and others sprinkle; but to my way of thinking, a drop of water on the tip of the finger is as good as an ocean," I replied.

"Very well, then; let us go, in the name of the Lord!"

Accordingly, we followed the stranger, as with hasty steps, he led us up one street and down another till we came to a miserable court, consisting of shabby old wooden houses. Entering the open door of one of these wretched abodes, we followed our guide up a dark, narrow, rickety stairs, and into a meagerly-furnished room.

The first thing that met our gaze was a bed on which

lay a child about a year old, evidently in the last stages of cholera infantum. Bending over it, in silent agony, crouched the mother. On our entrance, she turned quickly around, flung back her raven tresses, and, with clasped hands lifted heavenward, muttered something in a language I could not understand — doubtless, thanking God that help had come at last.

It was one of the most touching and even tragic scenes I ever beheld.

Life still fluttered in the breast of the little sufferer. I requested the father to bring us a bowl of water. He did so, and then I asked him what name we should give the child.

"Same as the blessed mother," he replied.

I pointed to the woman.

"No, no!" — shaking his head — "the blessed Mother of God — Maria, Maria!"

At the mention of the Virgin's name, the woman, with clasped hands and streaming eyes raised toward the ceiling, moaned a petition to Her whom she felt could well sympathize with a mother in her hour of anguish.

I then baptized the child according to the usual form, and made on its little brow the sign of the cross. Whereupon both father and mother fell on their knees, crossing themselves and muttering prayers in low, soft gutturals.

Then we also knelt on the bare floor, and the captain implored the Divine Father, if it was His will, to heal the child and give it back to its parents; but if such was not His will, then take it to Himself in glory everlasting.

Scarcely had the captain's tender and tearful supplication ended, ere the little spirit had winged its upward flight.

But now it was safe — safe, as its parents believed, in the bosom of the ever-blessed and holy Mother!

Never before did it occur to me what consolation such simple-minded people must derive from this belief in the all-compassionate *Mother*. It was, indeed, a touching object-lesson.

In lively gratitude to us, the poor couple kissed our hands, and bathed them in a flood of tears.

But the captain's interest in them did not terminate with this ceremony. He saw to the funeral, which took place two days after, and had the little coffin deposited in the strangers' lot of the cemetery.

Nor would even this have been all, had not the sudden disappearance of the couple put it out of our power to do anything more for them.

The day after the funeral, the captain requested me to call round and see how they were getting along; but I found their room vacated, and have not been able to trace them since.

No doubt, they were either Roman or Greek Catholics; but being foreigners, they did not know where to go or what to do. The man, at some time, must have floated into the Mission-room, and supposing it to be a place of worship, concluded that the captain would be the right person to baptize his child. . . .

All these incidents, coming one after the other, tend to

confirm and strengthen the captain's conviction that it is his sacred duty to identify himself with the great body of professing Christians, and secure for the Mission the help and coöperation of the Church. That he should ever have had any doubt or hesitancy on the question may seem strange to many; but from the captain's standpoint, it is perfectly reasonable and consistent, as you must be very well aware. He is rapidly coming, however, to a more comprehensive knowledge of the truth. Of that, I feel assured.

XV.

ONE day last week, as the captain was hurrying along the street on some errand of mercy, he met Father Burke, the parish priest, who, shaking his hand, said, "Captain Antle, you're always full of business—always active and wide-awake."

"Ay, ay, sir," the captain replied; "but not half as wide-awake and active as the devil."

"Ha! ha! Well, now, I'm not so sure of that either, captain. You don't let him have it all his own way, I'm thinking. You keep on his track pretty well."

"I try to do so, Father Burke, with the help of the Lord."

"And helping you He is, I'm sure of that; for the good work you're doing down there beyond must have His blessing. It's a great work, and no mistake. Many's the poor creature you bring to his senses and turn his steps from wrong-doing. You do indeed. Oh! I know all about it, Captain Antle; yes, I know all about it. It's a good work; and I pray the Lord to bless you in it." Then, whispering behind his hand in the captain's ear, "Only keep sectarianism out of it, and you're all right. Don't try to make a church of it, you understand. Let the Mission be as free for all as God's air and sunlight, and no fear but you'll prosper."

"That's my intention, please God," replied the captain, with emphasis. "That's my intention, whatever happens."

"Good! That's right! That's right! . . . Come and see me sometime, why can't you?"

"I was thinking of doing so, Father Burke," said the captain.

"Well, do then."

"I shall, please God. I have a question or two to ask you."

"All right! All right! Come any time. Come to-morrow forenoon. You'll find me in my study. Don't forget now. To-morrow forenoon. Good day."

Next day the captain made his promised call on the good old priest, who heartily welcomed him to his rather untidy and forlorn-looking study, in which everything seemed to be gathered except books.

"I suppose you won't take anything—not even a cigar?" Father Burke asked his visitor.

The captain smiled and shook his head.

"Well, I thought not. I don't myself. I have a demi-john and a box of cigars over there in the corner. Some of my clerical friends, when they drop in, expect the like. But I have no use for such myself. . . . Well, how's everything anyway?"

"All is well, thank God! All is well!" exclaimed the captain. "And now what I wanted to ask you, Father Burke, is, as to whether you think our Mission can secure the friendly recognition of your Church? We expect this from the other Churches; but can we also have it from yours? We don't ask for money, you understand; all we want is friendly recognition — can we have it?"

The priest knit his brows meditatively a few seconds; then folding his arms and leaning back in his chair, he said, "Now, Captain Antle, let me ask you what do you be wanting their recognition for anyway? Aren't you doing well enough as it is?"

"I'm strongly advised to do so by some of the best and wisest friends of the Mission, and the Lord seems to be leading me in that direction."

"Yes, but what's your own feeling in the matter? What do you think of it yourself?"

"Well, for myself, I'd rather be independent, as we are now. I'd rather do our work and trust in the Lord."

"There you have it!" exclaimed the priest with a snap of his fingers. "That's just it. Do your work and trust in the Lord! What's better than that? Only let the poor creatures know that however low down they are, they're not beyond Christian sympathy—not beyond the love of God—and it will do them a power of good. It will cause them to respect themselves. Ah! there's nothing like a little kindness and consideration for the like of them. It acts like sunshine on the soil. It awakens their inner life—their consciences—their souls—their hearts. Then they'll listen to you. Then you may tell them of a Saviour. Then you may point them to the sacred heart of Jesus. Point them to His five bleeding wounds and His crown of thorns. Tell them of His passion in the garden and His agony on the cross—and all for them—all for their salvation; and without their hearts are harder than the nether millstone, they must be touched

— they must be softened — they must feel a throb of love and gratitude.

“For, my dear friend, whatever we are — whatever we call ourselves as Christians — we all stand with the blessed women, weeping at the foot of the cross; but, thanks be to God, we may also stand on the mount, with the holy apostles, looking up at our ascended Saviour, who, though He left us in the flesh, promised to be with us in spirit, even to the end of the world. And with us He will be, so long as we’re faithful to Him and to the work He gives us to do. . . . But here am I preaching to you, who know it all as well as myself. Yes; you know it. And you’re doing a good work down there, and doing it well. And so what need is there of seeking help or recognition from any of us? For the first thing we should do, whether Catholic or Protestant, would be to put you under our thumb, let me tell you — yes, whether Protestant or Catholic. So my advice to you is to remain as you are, and, as you say, do your work and trust in the Lord.”

“But, you see, Father Burke, here’s the point. I am not a church-member. I’ve never made profession of faith in any Christian Church. I stand outside them all; and though, doing the Lord’s work, as I believe, I’m not satisfied that I’m doing it in the right way and for the best interest of the Mission. I think it’s my duty to join myself openly with some Church, and it’s only a question now as to what Church I’d better join.”

“Well, I shan’t take it upon myself to dictate to you any-

thing on *that* point. *That's* a question between God and your own soul—your own conscience; although” added the priest with a significant wink, “you know, perhaps, what *my* advice to you would be. But, setting that aside; as a friend of your Mission, allow me to say, if you make it sectarian, you kill it—yes, *kill* it! You will make your platform so narrow, that, in the scramble to stand on it, each will push the other off. You will, captain, now I warn you! Don't make it sectarian, whatever you do.”

“Oh no! It will never be sectarian, so long as I have anything to do with it,” the captain earnestly declared. “All I ask—all I expect, is the plain and simple recognition of the Churches. Every week—almost every day, the necessity of this is borne in on me, and I feel as if some new departure will have to be made, and that *soon*. . . . Now the question is, Can the Mission hope to secure the favor and recognition of the Catholic Church along with all the others?”

Father Burke regarded his visitor with a pitying smile, and with his thin fingers tip to tip, replied in a tender voice, “Ah, captain! but there *are* no others—there *can be* no others. There may be societies of people calling themselves churches; but there can be only the one Church of which Christ Himself is the Head in heaven and His viceregent the head on earth—the one holy Catholic Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

“And don't think that it's prejudice or bigotry that makes me say this—it's the light within me; for, God knows, I have nothing but charity for all men of whatever name, and

a sincere desire to give them all the help I can. Therefore, I must hold there is only the one holy Mother Church — one apostolic priesthood — one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism — one seamless robe of Christ.

“For, let me ask you as a reasonable man, if she were not the true and only Church of Christ on earth, could she have weathered the storms of persecution that have assailed her from the beginning—the martyrdoms, the defections, the schisms, the betrayals of eighteen centuries, so that, to-day, she is the most powerful and fearless exponent of Christianity in the world? Could she, I ask you, have held up the blessed Cross of Christ to a perishing world for so many centuries, through evil report and good, if she were not herself upheld and inspired by the love and wisdom of God himself? I ask you that, as a reasonable man.”

Captain Antle, whose simple but fervent nature is always more or less influenced by an argument when eloquently expressed, replied enthusiastically,

“Father Burke, I believe every word you have spoken! Yes, with all my heart, I do; for although I never could be a Roman Catholic myself, I have the greatest respect and even love for your great and noble Church. It has, as you say, upheld the Cross in the face of all the world, and that nobly and fearlessly; and I don't know where Christianity would be to-day, if it were not for the zeal and loyalty of the Roman Catholic Church; but, at the same time —”

“Hold on a minute,” interrupted the priest, with uplifted finger. “You say you could never be a Catholic;

now wasn't there a time when you weren't even a Christian? Answer me that, please."

"There was a time, Father Burke, — a long, dark, and dreadful time, — when I was nothing but a poor, miserable, blind, blaspheming sinner, without God and without hope in the world. But, blessed be His holy name, He arrested me in my downward course! He smote me to the ground. He drew me out of the mire — out of the horrible pit — and made me to sit down in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. He forgave all my sins and called me His son! And now I want no man — no priest, parson, or pope to come between me and my Redeemer. He is mine and I am His. What more can I ask? What more can any man or even any Church do for me?

"That is why I could never be a Churchman or a Catholic. I can't for one moment let go of the hand of Jesus. That is why I have stood so long outside the Church, and looked neither to the right nor to the left, but up to Him alone in my Mission work; and He has blessed us abundantly hitherto, and will continue to bless us so long as we continue to put our trust in Him. . . . So, Father Burke, if the Mission can expect no recognition from your Church, it must be God's will that we shall have to do without it."

"My dear captain," the priest replied, leaning over and talking in a confidential tone, "it's not for me to say anything as to *that* matter, one way or the other. The Church, as you are doubtless aware, is a hierarchy, and obedience to those put in authority over us is our first duty as devout

and faithful children. But there is this much I can tell you, Captain Antle—so long as the Mission does the kind of work it has been doing, and *in the way it has been doing it*, it will have *my* recognition, if that's any good; but better still—ininitely better—it will have the blessing of Almighty God. . . . Go on, then—go on in the good old way. Hunt up the lost and straying sheep. Let them know they have a Shepherd who cares for them, and they will reach the fold sooner or later, you may depend on that."

Next day, when the captain related to me the particulars of this interview, he concluded by saying, "Mr. Watson, I believe the old man is perfectly honest, and a good Christian according to the light that is in him; and so, I doubt not, are most of the priesthood, as well as their flocks likewise. I have no doubt but they'll reach heaven at last somehow or other. At all events, I hope and pray so, with all my heart. For do you know what came into my head, as I walked down the street meditating on all these differences among Christian people? I thought of Paul's shipwrecked crew, when as many as two hundred three score and sixteen souls were struggling for their lives in the raging sea; but everyone of them—some by swimming, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship—every soul of them escaped safe to land—not one lost! Well, so I believe, it will be with every poor struggler for salvation. They will all land, bless the Lord, on the heavenly shore at last!"

You request me to give you some facts in reference to Captain Antle's creed and religious experiences, so far as can be gathered from his daily life and utterances. From your long personal acquaintance with him, I fancy you must be quite as well informed on these points as myself, and even better; because you had the opportunity of noting his Christian career at its inception, as well as much of its subsequent development. That the captain, notwithstanding his wonderful conversion, is no exception to the general rule that the Christian life is one of growth and progress, one of trial and temptation, one of labor and struggle, must be evident to all who have been brought in contact with him. I will, however, endeavor to comply with your request.

And first, with regard to the captain's creed (which, of course, is the governing principle of his life), he believes the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, and in the interpretation of which, he is, for the most part, a strict literalist. Hence he understands every sentence recorded in Holy Writ to mean exactly what it seems to express. He believes in a personal God, the Father Almighty, who so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour, that whosoever believeth in Him should have eternal life. He believes in a personal devil, going about as a roaring lion, whose one great aim is to defeat the will of God in the redemption of the world. He believes that the Holy Ghost, who first came down among men on the day of Pentecost, enters into the hearts of all true believers, giving them

strength to contend with the adversary of souls, and finally to gain the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. He believes that forgiveness of sins is the immediate result of sincere repentance; but that, nevertheless, all of our subsequent life on earth must be one long struggle to maintain the mastery over the devil and his angels; and that this battle can only be triumphant so long as the Holy Ghost is in our hearts.

These, then, so far as I can gather, are the principal articles of Captain Antle's creed, which he maintains with such unwavering faith that no one can come into his presence any length of time without becoming aware of "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." And that, not by what is known as "sanctimoniousness"; but rather by a sweet, pure, genial atmosphere which seems ever to surround him. As one expressed it, "An interview with Captain Antle is like warming oneself before a good fire on a chilly day. The most devout and zealous among us seem cold and lifeless compared with him. A faith so childlike united with a personality so virile is something we don't often encounter in our modern experience; we have to go back for it to a more primitive age of the world."

And now as to the captain's religious experiences, as gathered from his daily life and utterances; by which I presume you mean, the manifestation of his mental and spiritual condition from day to day. This is no easy matter to state; and yet, from his own frequent confessions, there is evidence of a perpetual conflict between the flesh and the

spirit. I will give you, as nearly as I can call to mind, a few of his characteristic utterances: —

“From the moment the Lord opened my eyes to the present hour, the devil has never left me a single day in peace—he has always been at me; and I know that nothing would please him better than to have Antle the miserable old reprobate he used to be. But I have no fear—not a particle of fear, so long as I can cling to the arm of my Saviour.

“Oh, yes! It’s all love and joy here;” (slapping his bosom) “but all around me are ten thousand imps of Satan; and the worst of it is, they know just where I am weakest! Oh, they do—they do! They know how easy it might be for me to fall, if I didn’t keep a firm grip of the Lord Jesus. Watch and pray—watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. That is it! That’s my motto.

“You may think it’s an easy matter to be a Christian. Well, my friends, all I know is that I never found it so. It’s a blessed thing—a glorious thing; but it’s not an easy thing. It’s an easy thing to be a holiday soldier; but not so easy to fight the battle and gain the victory. And what else should a man enlist for but to fight battles and gain victories? Ah! I’m afraid there are too many holiday-soldiers among us. They make a noble appearance on parade; but when it comes to fighting—well, they pay for a substitute. I don’t think much of the man who has no battles to fight. It must be a poor soul indeed that the

devil doesn't think it worth his while to tempt, — being such easy game.

“If it was only the devil we had to fight, it mightn't be so bad; because, having the shield of faith, we can quench all his fiery darts; but the worst of it is, we have our own evil natures to contend with besides. That, I find, is the hardest thing to manage, because it is part of myself — bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Oh, I don't wonder so many poor fellows give up in despair! Not at all! But let us always remember that we can do all things — *all things* — through Christ, who strengthens us! With the Lord Jesus on our side, we are able to defy the world, the flesh, and the devil!”

These few utterances of the captain's (which I give you, as it were, in the rough, and to which I might readily add), sufficiently indicate that Captain Antle, like all true soldiers of the Cross, has the same battle *to fight*, the same Faith *to keep*, the same crown of glory *to win*.

To this, let me add one little characteristic incident which happened not long ago. An old sailor, a former messmate, met the captain on the street, and seizing his hand, exclaimed, “Why, George, lad, they tells me you're pious! How's that, eh?”

“Well,” the captain replied with a genial smile, “I don't know exactly, Tom, what they mean by my being pious; but if it is because I hate what I used to love and love what I used to hate, why then, I suppose, I must be pious.”

The sailor blinked and, rolling over his quid, asked,

"But, George, you don't hate your old messmates, do ye?"

"Hate my old messmates!" the captain returned, throwing his arm affectionately around the sailor's neck. "No, Tom; I love them ten times more than ever; but what I *do* hate, Tom, is the old devil who's lying in wait for them round every street-corner, every rum-hole, every bad-house, every land-shark's den. That's what I hate, messmate; and if you'll come along with me, I'll tell you about One who can keep you from falling into his infernal clutches — yes, Tom, the best friend you or I ever had or can have, in this world or any other."

A fitting sequel to this should be that "Tom" accompanied the captain and became a good Christian; but truth compels me to state that he was arrested in a drunken brawl that very afternoon. "Many are called, but few are chosen."

XVI.

THE other day the captain came into the Mission-room leading by the hand a pitiable little tatterdemalion of a boy about seven or eight years of age. The poor child, who, doubtless, had not eaten a square meal for many a day, if ever, was ravenously devouring some dough-nuts the captain bought him.

"Mr. Watson, here's a boy we must look out for. He needs a suit of clothes and a home of some kind. I found him in the police-station. His father, it seems, died two years ago and his mother was buried last week; so he hasn't a soul in the world to care for him, except us. What's best to be done about it, do you think?" the captain queried perplexedly.

The easiest way out of the difficulty, of course, would have been to take the child to the orphans' asylum or the poor-house; but that was not the captain's way of meeting the case. He has a strong aversion to asylums and poor-houses, and would apply to such institutions only when all other resources had failed. As there was nobody to claim the boy, it was God's will that he, the captain, should be his protector. I don't think he has any particular fondness for children, *as* children; but as a friendless waif, the little fellow appealed to his tenderest sympathies.

Before putting the boy into clean clothes, it would be

advisable to introduce him to the bath-tub; for it was painfully evident that not only soap and water, but a fine-toothed comb was necessary to make him at all presentable in any decent household; and the sooner these sanitary measures were taken, the better for all concerned. It was one of those occasions when a man feels himself to be comparatively helpless, and instinctively turns to the "weaker sex," so termed, for that maternal, self-sacrificing, intelligent care they are so capable of bestowing.

In the midst of our quandary, who should make her appearance but the widow Jones, with a bundle of under-clothing for one of our men!

"Why, sister Jones!" the captain exclaimed, grasping her hand. "Surely the Lord must have sent you in here in answer to our prayer, and He didn't keep us long waiting either, bless His Holy Name! Sister Jones, here's a little chap with no friends in the world but us — no father but God, and no mother but *you*. What's to be done with him? You see what he needs at a glance."

The good woman surveyed the child a few moments, and then heaved a weary sigh. "Yes; he needs to be cared for, that's a fact. But, Captain Antle, I'm sure I don't know! My hands are so full already, I don't see how I can do anything for him just now."

"But, my dear sister, it's just now he needs attending to," urged the captain. "If you'll undertake to give him a scrubbing, I'll have him rigged in less than no time. All I ask you is to give him a bath. I'll look out for him after that."

The Lord has placed him in our hands, Sister Jones, and we must do our duty by him."

"Oh, certain, Captain Antle! It's our duty to befriend the orphan and the outcast; but there *is* such a thing, you know, sir, as taking upon one's self more than one can do, and so letting some other duty be slighted. But, however, Captain Antle, I don't know but what I can do for the child for the present, and then, perhaps, —"

"The Lord will do the rest," promptly added the captain. "So now, sister, we will run round to a clothing-store with the lad, and you can take him and his bundle home with you, and to-morrow or next day, you may bring him down here, and we'll take him off your hands."

It was over two weeks before the widow Jones came to see us again, and then she was accompanied by a bright, attractive-looking little lad, who, it scarcely seemed possible, was the miserable waif of so brief a time before! But he it was, and he even had a name! It was Willie; and, furthermore, he had no objection to be known as Willie Jones!

The kind-hearted woman, evidently not a little proud of her *protégé*, said that if we didn't mind, she would just as soon keep the child right along and send him to school; for he seemed, she declared, to be different from the "common run" — was a good boy and "real smart" for his age.

"Ah, sister!" returned the captain, "didn't I tell you the Lord sent you in here in answer to our prayers?"

What might have become of the boy had not the captain found him, who can say! " . . .

But speaking of widows, I must tell you of something very curious and interesting — something — the only thing, so far as I am aware, approaching the romantic in the life of Captain Antle.

That he has never happened to meet one of the “opposite sex” with whom he may have desired to share the joys and sorrows of life, seems strange, no doubt, to many; but to you and me who know him so intimately, such an event is scarcely within the range of probability.

Whatever other quality of head or heart the captain may possess, he seems to be totally destitute of sentiment, in the common acceptation of the word. Beauty, whether in art, nature, or person, has little or no charms for him. Its appeal to his sympathies is as nothing compared with that which is evoked by what most people consider the repulsive and seamy side of humanity.

Hence it is of little use for anyone, however personally attractive, to hope for any special indulgence from him through the arts and blandishments usually practiced by the designing and the crafty. Of this, doubtless, you are well aware; but so much by way of introduction to what follows.

One Sunday morning, a lovely bouquet of flowers was found on the captain's desk. The only person who knew anything about it was Sandy McGregor, who informed me that “a braw leedy cam in till the room an pit 'em ther.”

This was about all that Sandy could inform us, except that she was dressed in black, and closely veiled. She walked out without uttering a syllable to anyone. Indeed Sandy,

who was arranging the seats, was the only person present at the time.

So that was all we knew of the "veiled lady" then; but I was curious to observe how the captain would regard the floral offering, which filled the room with its delicate fragrance. It lay on the Bible, so that he could not possibly disregard it.

Supposing that the bouquet was the gift of some young sailor, as an expression of gratitude or affection, the captain took it up, smelt it, nodded in a general way, and carefully laid it down on a side seat, never alluding to it or even touching it again. Accordingly, Sandy, after the meeting was over, placed it in a glass of water on my writing desk. So much for that — as a beginning.

Two Sundays passed, and another bouquet as mysteriously made its appearance, and as quietly shared the fate of its predecessor. A third Sunday found a similar tribute on the reading-desk, and then the captain felt constrained to speak.

"I don't know," he said, holding up the flowers, "which of you brought in these or how much they may have cost; but let me say, dear boys, the money could be laid out to much better advantage, where there are so many poor miserable creatures needing food and clothing. Beautiful as these are, it would give me greater satisfaction to know that the money spent for them went to feed some starving family this blessed Sabbath day, and so be doing some good."

This was all; and bouquet number three followed the

way of the rest. As the captain made no further reference to the flowers, neither Sandy nor I alluded to them in any way to him. For my part, I presumed they came from one of those singular people whose morbid sympathies prompt them to make such offerings to any noted individual, whether in the pulpit or on the scaffold—a sort of amiable mania. When, however, a fourth bouquet came along, which it did two Sundays after, a card was found attached to it, bearing the address of the donor. This, in a measure, solved the mystery; but only to make the situation still more complicated.

The “veiled lady” proved to be the widow of a master-mariner, whom the captain had known in former days; so he felt it to be our duty to make some acknowledgment of her mistaken favors, and kindly request her to discontinue them.

Thinking over the matter more deliberately, he concluded that it would be best for him to call on the lady himself, and assure her that while he appreciated her good intentions, it would please him better if she spent her money in charity to the poor.

As I now began to suspect the woman’s designs and feared that our warm-hearted, simple-minded friend might be inveigled into some mischief, I suggested to him that perhaps the best way would be to make the acknowledgment in writing, and there let the matter rest.

But no; he thought, under the circumstances, as he had known her husband and she had taken the trouble to show

her friendliness toward the Mission by bringing the flowers herself, it would be nothing more than right for him to go and thank her personally.

Accordingly the call was made; and so far as I could learn, his visit, though very brief, sufficed to give him anything but a favorable impression of the "friendly" widow.

A month or six weeks passed and nothing more was heard of Mrs. Dash, when one day who should enter the room but the lady herself!

After a good deal of circumlocution, she informed me (for the captain was not present, much to her evident disappointment,) that she had resolved to devote a portion of her time to Mission-work, and desired to be informed in what way she could be of most service to us.

I assured her that there were many ways in which she could help the good cause, such, for example, as visiting the sick and administering to the needs of the poor.

She replied that for years she had been doing this kind of work in a quiet way; but she thought that by being more intimately associated with the Water-street Mission, she could labor to better advantage — she *knew* she could.

Now I must confess I am of a less confiding nature than the captain, and so, fancying that I detected something in the manner and appearance of Mrs. Dash that was not assuring, I frankly informed her that I was quite sure she could do as much if not more good in her own way, than if under the guidance of the Mission.

As this advice, however, did not appear to satisfy her,

she said she would think over the matter and perhaps call again some other time.

Well, to make a long story short, she did call again and again, and that too, at all hours of the day and evening. Not only so, but she even followed the captain to his lodgings; so persistent was Mrs. Dash in her efforts to induce him to allow her to become, in some prominent way, connected with the Mission.

At last, it all came out. It was at one of her visits to the Mission-room, when she took occasion to assure the captain, that, after much meditation and prayer, she felt the time had arrived for her to take a decided step, and state plainly what had been so long weighing on her mind, as an unfulfilled duty.

She felt the deepest interest in the work of the Mission. She loved the sailor, if it was only for the sake of her poor dear husband, and either directly or indirectly, she wished to devote herself to their well-being.

She knew that the captain must carry a load of care and anxiety on his mind, and as he was advancing in years and naturally growing less able to sustain this burden each day, she resolved to sink all personal considerations — even those feelings of reserve and modesty so becoming to a lady — and offer herself as a helpmate to him for life, when he should have not only a comfortable home, but that affectionate care and attention he so much needed and would continue to need more and more!

For a moment the captain was nonplussed by the lady's

altogether too generous offer; but when its significance could be no longer doubted, the captain plainly informed her that if she meant his quitting his old lodgings and taking rooms in her house, he didn't believe anyone could suit him better than the Williamses. He had nothing whatever to complain of, and saw no reason for a change at present.

If, however, she meant marriage, he could set her mind at rest on that point, by assuring her, once and for all, that he believed it to be the Lord's will that he should remain single and devote himself body and soul to the work he was called to do.

Anyway, he said, it was neither his intention nor his desire to change his condition in life; for he was fully persuaded that he could neither be happy himself nor make a wife happy—not even such a good wife as, doubtless, she would make. *This*, he hoped, would be the end of the matter.

As to whether or not this will be the end of the matter, remains, of course, to be seen. I scarcely think that even Mrs. Dash will have the temerity to make any further advances, and trust that this is the last we shall hear of her, so far, at least, as the Mission is concerned.

* * *

. . . The captain has at last decided to unite with our Society on profession of faith; so, probably, on the first Sunday in next month, he will be received.

Dr. Carter, of course, is very much pleased, and you can readily understand how gratifying it must be to the captain's

staunch old friend, and his and your own former employer, Mr. Buckminster, who, I am informed, is soon to retire from active business, after fifty-five years of mercantile life.

If it is only by reason of what he has done for our Mission, Mr. Buckminster is entitled to the perpetual gratitude of this whole community; but, really, from a financial standpoint, this is only a small part of his great work of benevolence.

As our old-school merchants drop off one after another, we ask ourselves with fear and trembling, Who are coming to fill their places? . . . However, I fancy I hear you murmur reprovingly, "Be not faithless, but believing." I shall try to do so, dear brother.

XVII.

LAST Sunday was truly a red-letter day in Captain Antle's calendar. He was received into the Church, and, for the first time, partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Although the weather was rainy and disagreeable, the Church was crowded; as, probably, it was expected that the captain would, in some way, make the services unusually interesting. As a matter of fact, however, not one of the thirty-six candidates for membership, was more humble and undemonstrative.

The whole service, from beginning to end, was exceptionally impressive; and I never remember Mr. Carter when he was more felicitous and effective, not only in the devotional exercises, but in his discourse as well. His theme was the Eucharist, — its origin, meaning, and obligation.

Beginning with a vivid word-picture of the Last Supper, when Christ announced to His sorrowing disciples that He should "not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God," the preacher went on to explain the different views of the sacrament as held by the various denominations, such as the transubstantiation of the Catholics, the consubstantiation of the Lutherans, and the superstitious and fantastic notions of others.

He cited the opinions of leading doctors of divinity from Hooker to Chalmers, and then stated his own convictions on

the subject. While he would avoid mysticism or superstition on the one hand, he would as earnestly discountenance that kind of participation which degraded the Holy Communion to the level of a mere social function.

He doubted very much whether any formulation of doctrine or article of faith could possibly embody or express such an idea of the Eucharist as would be acceptable to all devout believers. Much depends on personal equation. It has a deeper, tenderer, more spiritual signification for some than for others, and though certain formalities may not be insisted upon, yet, no doubt, it was best, as the Church had long determined, that the Lord's Supper should be participated in openly and collectively by all sincere believers in Christ's redemption.

These are some of the leading points in Dr. Carter's very eloquent sermon, which was as lucid in statement as it was convincing in argument.

The captain sat by my side and scarcely moved a muscle all through; but, fixing his attention on the preacher, appeared to be absorbing every word that was uttered.

The sermon ended, the captain drew a long breath, quietly caught my hand, and, touching his breast, whispered, "It's all here!" — meaning, probably, that his heart responded to it all.

While partaking of the Communion, tears trickled down his cheeks, and I could overhear him murmur, "His blessed body, broken for me! His precious blood, shed for me!"

That he realized the presence of Christ in our midst, I

have no doubt; and it must have needed no little self-control for him to remain so still and undemonstrative all through the solemn services.

I have only space to add that the captain has hired a pew in the gallery, which is to be known as the "sailors' pew," and it is his intention to try and secure similar accommodations in as many churches as he can, trusting that a sufficient number of Christian men and women may be found to meet the cost.

* * *

. . . The great struggle over, the captain is himself again. In fact, he is more than himself; by which I mean that he appears to have had an accession of all his powers, mental, physical and spiritual. He is more indefatigable, more tireless and unremitting in labor, and, if possible, more exuberantly joyful. This latter is especially noticeable, as there can be no doubt that the question of Church-connection has weighed heavily on his mind for some time past. It was the cloud which obscured his sunshine—the fly in the ointment.

His earnest desire was to be right, and yet, if possible, right according to his own ideas. And this, not through any perversity or wilfulness, but because he believed his own way to be God's way. Now this is all changed, and he rejoices in that loving fraternization with all denominations, which is the true bond of Christian unity.

* * *

. . . Since I last wrote you, several ministers have participated in the exercises of the Mission-meetings, and many

people of wealth and standing have manifested their interest in the work.

A few days ago, we had a visit from Professor R., who, though a man of the highest moral integrity, and a regular attendant at Church, is not a believer in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; but regards what we call *conversion*, as the sudden development, by reason of some fortuitous circumstances, of certain innate ideas, just as a forest fire will be succeeded by a growth of berry-bearing shrubs, the germs of which had been already in the soil.

This is a plausible theory, of course, and one not easily disproved; for, while the external evidences of conversion are manifest to all (as, for instance, in the case of Captain Antle), it is by no means easy to trace previously existing, but latent, mental qualities.

That a radical change is wrought in individual character and conduct, no one can deny—it is obvious to everyone; but whether this is the result of internal development or external influence—whether the growth is indigenous or exotic—the unfolding of an inner germ or an entirely new transplantation, is not a question to be answered off-hand.

Professor R. holds to the development theory; but Captain Antle, of course, to the “new-birth,” giving *himself* as an example of a “*new creature in Christ Jesus*.”

The captain being neither a dialectician nor a metaphysician, the debate between the two was very curious and interesting. It was a duel with entirely different weapons, the one, as it were, being material the other spiritual. I wish I

could reproduce it for your benefit; but I can only give you a meagre outline. You can readily fancy the bearing and attitude of the two—the captain all fervor and spirituality; the professor calm, cool, and philosophical.

With his usual hearty hand-grasp, the captain received his visitor, and expressed his great pleasure at having the professor come and see with his own eyes what the Lord was doing in their midst—rescuing the outcast and the abandoned and bringing them as humble suppliants at the foot of the cross—especially the poor sailor, who had no one to care for his soul, but all the powers of darkness arrayed against it.

“And you really find,” inquired Professor R., “that these men, usually so recklessly vicious, are induced to lead correct and moral lives?”

“Mr. R., a sailor can't very well be a hypocrite,” replied the captain; “not long, he can't be—scarcely over night, in fact. He can't pay out cable enough to anchor in hell and yet ride in heaven. No, sir. Neither can he steer through the breakers and the shoals and the reefs with his hands in his pockets. He's either got to hold the tiller, and keep a sharp lookout, or go to the bottom—one or the other. There's no half way.”

“I understand, captain. The temptations that surround the sailor are so numerous and powerful that unless he is very cautious and circumspect, he must get into trouble. Yes, I see what you mean.”

“The temptations that surround the sailor are so numer-

ous and powerful, that unless he has the grace of God in his heart, he must fall. And it is just the same, sir, with regard to you and me; only, perhaps, our temptations are of a different kind—that's all. There are temptations for the head as well as for the heart—for the eyes as well as for the stomach. We all know that."

"Certainly, Captain Antle; we all know that. Temptations which may appeal irresistibly to poor Jack, have no attraction for us—are repulsive, in fact, to you and me; while, on the other hand, pride of intellect, not to mention the more refined forms of sensualism may lead even us astray, if not strictly on our guard."

"And there is no other way we can be on our guard, except to have Christ within us the hope of glory—except to be born again of the Holy Spirit. Then, sir, whenever the thief comes, whether by day or night, he finds us prepared—he can't take us by surprise, no matter in what guise he comes. If the heart is only the Lord's, then the devil can have no power over us."

"That's very true, Captain Antle. A man can only be safe so long as his principles are sound and his appetites and passions controlled by reason."

"Yes, sir; and his reason controlled by the Holy Spirit—by the Spirit of holiness. How long, sir, do you suppose this Mission could live without the Holy Spirit in our midst? Not a week—not a day—no more than we can live without air. No, sir. It's no manner of use to slap Jack on the back; tell him he's a fine fellow; but he ought to be a good

boy, and quit rum and bad company, and go to church. Why, he'd only laugh at you; and who could blame him? It's no use — not a bit.

“Take a young fellow who's been knocking round the world for five or six months — living a dog's life and worse. Take that man and set him ashore with a pocket-full of money and all his appetites and passions raging within him, and talk to him about reason and principle — why, it's like whistling to a mile-stone! His reason tells him to enjoy himself, and his only principle is to have as good a time as he can, while he has the opportunity.

“It's all very well to talk, sir; but such talk is like rain on a duck's back. It's no manner of use! You've got to tear open his bosom and let the light and warmth of God's love shine right into his heart, till the stony is melted, the darkness chased away, and he cries aloud for God to have mercy on him — till he finds forgiveness and joy and peace. Then, and then only, can he have strength to resist temptation and steer his course in safety.”

“I have not the least doubt of it, Captain Antle, — not the least doubt of it; and yet, haven't you found this to be the case with regard to most, if not all, of those persons who have come under the influence of your prayers and persuasions? Haven't you found that, however reckless and immoral may have been their conduct hitherto, down deep in their natures was some germ of conscience which often whispered its rebukes to them — some trace of early teaching — some memory of a father's counsel or a mother's love,

which, like a smouldering spark, was fanned into flame by an unexpected, well-directed word or act of kindness from someone like yourself? Haven't you found that to be the case in more than one instance, Captain Antle? Nay, haven't you found it to be almost invariably the case?"

"Bless the Lord, yes! Yes, sir! I've never met with one of God's human creatures, however deep down in the mire of sin and wickedness, that didn't have some little spark of light in his soul, when I knew where to look for it. I believe, sir, there is no one so bad that the grace of God can't reach and save, and no one so good as to be saved without that grace. It saved the thief on the cross, and it has saved me, who was much worse. Nothing but grace saved us, whether we had any light in us or not; and I'm afraid I didn't have even a glimmer.

"I can't argue, sir, but I can testify. I *know* that the Lord brought me out of darkness into light; but I can no more tell you how 'twas done than I can tell how the sun shines. Just as soon as I realized that I was a lost sinner, Jesus came to my rescue, and here I am to-day, bless the Lord! Here I am, sir, as different a man from what I was as I am from you, sitting there in that chair."

"The changes that are wrought in some men by sudden convictions and impressions are truly wonderful," remarked the professor. "I have known repeated instances of the kind myself, where persons have been completely revolutionized, as it were, not only as regards habits and conduct, but even in what seemed their fixed opinions and most stubborn preju-

dices, — men who, just as soon as they saw they were on the wrong track, wheeled right round and faced in quite an opposite direction. I've seen it not only in political but in social life."

"Yes, sir; and when a man realizes that he is nothing but a poor miserable sinner — blind, naked and helpless — and casts himself entirely on the Lord for mercy and salvation, then comes forgiveness and peace and strength and joy; then comes that change of heart, without which there can be no real and lasting change in life or conduct. It is that change which drove the poor, tattered, famishing prodigal back to his father, — the change all must have before they can expect to feel the Father's loving embrace and to hear His forgiving voice.

"As for me, sir, I'm nothing but a poor ignorant sailor, and you are a great and learned doctor; but I bless God He revealed Himself even to me, as He will to you or to any man who comes to Him with an humble and contrite heart; comes to Him as a little child, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

"Oh, my dear sir! I can't read the Holy Book in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, as you can — I can only read it in plain English; but to me, as I read, every word shines and glows like great blazing stars in the firmament — shines like a million eyes — like a million loop-holes letting the light of heaven into my soul. What more can I ask? What more could it do for me if I could read the blessed Book in all the languages

of the world? Could my faith be any stronger — my hopes any brighter? No, sir, not a particle. We must become little children. Whatever we are, whatever we have got — learning, riches, health, strength, youth, manhood, honor, fame — we must lay all at the feet of Jesus, and cry, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’”

That the professor was deeply impressed, I have every reason to believe; for he said no more, except to express his sense of gratitude and profit by the visit, and to assure the captain that he had not only given him food for thought but reasons for self-examination.

You, who are so familiar with Captain Antle’s personality, style, and manner, must observe how far short I come of doing anything like justice to his utterances in these imperfect notes of mine; but you may readily supply my deficiencies by the vividness of your remembrances.

Alas, how will it be with those who shall never know, see, or hear him! Stenography may set down his words and sentences; but how must it ever fail to reproduce that force, that unction, that magnetism, that tenderness, that pathos, that depth of meaning, expressed, not so much in the words as in the tone of the voice, the gesture of the hand, the gleam of the eye! Ah, no! This must forever be lost to the world — must pass away like a gorgeous sunset — like the notes of the Æolian harp, when the breeze dies down and the cords cease to vibrate.

... Every sailor who makes the "Snug Harbor" his home while in port, is urged, as a special favor, when about to embark again, to send us word, as soon as he has reached his destination. Nearly all who can write, promise to comply with the captain's request; and quite a number do so — a larger number, indeed, than might be expected, taking everything into consideration.

Of course, as you must be aware, the proportion of seamen who are equal to penning a letter is relatively small; but we feel as if it was worth while to have even these few keep us in remembrance. It seems like an extension of the Mission's operative influence, and, undoubtedly, helps to hold many a man in the path of rectitude.

I enclose a few of these missives, which, I fancy, will interest and perhaps surprise you; for some that we receive would do credit to more expert scribes than "common sailors" are usually supposed to be. Here is one addressed from an English sea-port: —

"We had a very good voyage, except for a few days; but even they were not very bad. I could think of nothing, when off duty, but stand and admire the sea in all its awful grandeur, as David of old admired the wonders of the starry heavens.

"One morning, as I stood on deck with a shipmate, and the waters rolled up around us, I remarked to him, 'Isn't this a grand sight?' He must have thought I was crazy; for to him it appeared as a very dangerous and threatening sea. The poor fellow could not realize that the God of the land

was also the God of the great deep! I admired the awful grandeur of the scene, because I had no fear. My trust was in Him who walked on the sea and who quieted its rage with 'Peace, be still.'

"I grieve to confess that I have often fallen since I saw you last — often done violence to my faith; but, thank God, I have as often risen and tried again, having this blessed assurance, 'If any man sin, he has an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ, the righteous;' and that promise gives me more hope than anything else I know.

"I pray, dear Captain Antle, that you may long continue to do good; for every soul you lead to the kingdom will be a jewel in your heavenly crown. God bless the Water-street Mission!"

Here is a brief epistle from Norfolk, Va.:

"I intended writing last evening, but began reading those tracts you were so kind as to give me when leaving the 'Snug Harbor,' and was so deeply interested, that it was bunk-time before I was aware of it.

"I pray daily for Captain Antle and everyone connected with the Water-street Mission. I am very thankful to God for all His goodness to me. It is wonderful that I should be living now. I am as happy as I can be, because I believe that Christ is watching over me, keeping me, and, by His grace, enabling me to resist temptations. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.'"

All the way from Buenos Ayres, come these lines: —

“We arrived here safely after a pleasant passage of fifty-eight days; and shall lose no time before reporting to the captain and my dear friends of the Water-street Mission.

“I often think of the evening when, in that room, I resolved to lead a new life. What a blessed change was that for me! I am now quite happy and find peace and enjoyment. I often read the third chapter of Revelation, and try to realize the precious promises there made to ‘him that overcometh.’ I do all I can to lead a Christian life and thus gain the promises in this chapter. I pray to the Lord to help and strengthen me to do His blessed will. I pray for your success and that the Lord may help you in your work. Please pray for me that I may be kept from all evil.”

“I have had a terrible trial,” writes another from Portland, Me., “but I came off victorious, and want to tell Captain Antle all about it, who, I know, will rejoice with me. A man came on board our vessel with a bottle of whiskey, and invited the second mate and myself into the forecabin to treat. The old appetite came upon me so strong that I thought I should surely give way to it. I left the forecabin as fast as I could and took a good drink of water. I walked back and forth on the deck, started several times to go down and drink with them; for I could hear them laughing, and, worst of all, I could *smell the liquor*. But the thought came to me, ‘Jesus knows.’ I prayed for strength, and was

thus enabled to withstand the temptation. I know now that I am stronger in Him. I bless and praise my Saviour that He is able to keep us from temptation as well as forgive all our sins."

* * *

. . . The captain has a new project on foot: it is no less than to inaugurate a reform in the present methods of church-work. "If the salvation of souls is the especial and distinctive purpose of churches," he argues, "why should they be closed six days out of seven?"

"Every other kind of public place, good, bad, and indifferent," he says, "is in full blast six days in the week, many of them seven days, and seven nights, too, for that matter; while here the churches are open only a few hours during the whole week! Is that as it should be? Is that making the most of their opportunities? If souls are saved on Sundays, why may they not be saved on other days as well? Are the gates of heaven bolted all the week, and the Lord asleep? Is the devil asleep all the week? I'm afraid we look upon churches as places of sacred recreation, rather than as places for perishing souls to seek and find their Saviour; and if so, do they pay for the enormous sums of money invested in them? Are we not sadly deluding ourselves on this whole matter? Every year we are building finer and more expensive churches. Are we saving more souls thereby? Do the *common people* crowd them? *Are they welcome?* How much of our religion consists in listening to fine music, attractive

preaching, ritualistic services, and the like! How many of us rest satisfied with this and nothing more!"

Such are among the questions now agitating the captain's mind — an agitation which he is determined to push through the Christian community, whether people hear or whether they forbear. He has already been urging his views on a number of our ministers; and, while most of them admit that such a reform would undoubtedly result in good, few consider it practical or even possible, as society is at present constituted — an argument, however, which has little weight with the captain, who is of opinion that not only church-work and methods, but the present constitution of society itself needs reforming, root and branch.

[The reader need scarcely be informed that many of our modern churches have adopted, to a certain extent, the methods and uses so strenuously advocated by Captain Antle; while not a few have even exceeded the limits designed by him, and, possibly, with quite as beneficial results as he could have anticipated.]

* * *

Nearly five months elapsed before I again heard from the Water-street Mission, and then, alas! came what must constitute our final chapter.

XVIII.

LONG before this, of course, you must have seen the sad announcement of Captain Antle's death. . . Even yet, I can scarcely believe it—scarcely realize that such a full, rich, active life is ended—such a bright light extinguished. It is inexplicable! What can we do but stand in wonder and ask ourselves, "Why is it? What means it?" . . . How many could be better spared! Yet he, of all others, is the one to be taken. . . . How truly mysterious are the ways of Providence.

His fatal malady gave him no intimation of its approach, possibly no suffering;

. . . "no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay;
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way."

Never was he more active and cheerful than during his last day on earth; but, in the night-watches, his angel came and led him softly home. Can we doubt that he is already reaping his glorious reward—that his delighted spirit has already heard the "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

That his loss to the Mission is irreparable, goes without saying. Although we have no lack of good friends and efficient helpers, the painful truth is all too evident, there can be only *one* George Antle. I tremble to think of it; but

confidently believe that the Lord will not allow his work to languish for want of human instrumentality. . .

The funeral service was held in the Mission-room, and was one of the most remarkable occasions of the kind I ever attended. Not only the room, but the street was thronged; while, out of respect to the deceased, the stores in the vicinity were closed, many of them draped in mourning, and every vessel in the port had her flag at half-mast.

Clergymen from four different denominations took part in the exercises, professional singers rendered the music, and eight sailors acted as bearers.

Just as the friends were about to be invited to view the remains for the last time, the Roman Catholic priest of the parish, the venerable Father Burke, stepped on the platform, and said: —

“My friends, though uninvited and, no doubt, unexpected, I make no apology for being here on this solemn occasion. The good man, — whose remains lie before us and whose voice, so familiar to many in this room, is now silent forever, — was the friend of us all — my friend as well as your friend — my brother as well as yours.

“Of the dead and the absent, to say nothing but what is good, is an old maxim and an excellent one. Surely, whether dead or living, absent or present, nothing but what is good could be truthfully spoken of him whom we mourn to-day. Yes, he was a good man, if ever there was one; and if any man ever strove to obey the Divine command, it was he. Like the holy apostles of old — the humble fishermen of

Galilee — he left all to follow the Lord ; and faithfully did he follow wherever those blessed footsteps led him.

“ Yes, he was a good man, and you will excuse me if I say he was a good Catholic ; for I mean by that, mark you, that his heart was large enough to take us all in, of whatever name or creed. I don’t believe that ever a word was heard in this room — at any rate, from his lips — either for or against any church or any denomination whatever ; so that adherents of all creeds came in here and forgot their differences — forgot all but their need of a Saviour. And all because of the largeness of his heart — all because he was human before he was anything else.

“ Known as the Sailor’s Friend, he was that and more — he was the friend of the poor, the outcast, the despised. Out of the mire of iniquity, he rescued many a poor creature ; and whether it was to your church or to my church that soul was added, was all one to him, so long as that soul was out of danger.

“ No one I ever knew, better exemplified the lesson of the Good Samaritan or more faithfully followed the teachings of Him who died on that cross which for you and for me is our common symbol of salvation. . .

“ Yes, he is gone ; but he is not dead. His working-day has ended ; but his work remains. His voice is silent ; but his words live in many a heart. His hands are folded ; but the good seed they scattered will multiply a hundredfold.

“ Farewell, brother ! but only for a day. We shall soon follow you. Would to God, we could leave behind us such a record as yours ! ”

No words that were uttered on the occasion made a deeper impression on the minds of the assembly than those of Father Burke.

It was an extraordinary circumstance, to be sure, for a Roman Catholic clergyman to be heard in such a place; but it must be remembered that the Mission-room was not a church nor Captain Antle a minister of any denomination.

Moreover, the captain and he were intimate friends, and the priest himself a man of broad sympathies and independent views. That he was thoroughly sincere in all he said or implied was evident not only from the tenderness of his expressions but from the tears that accompanied their delivery.

An opportunity was then given to view the remains, and for over half an hour, the crowd filed past — as motley a crowd, certainly, as ever was gathered together.

Never was coffin bedewed with more abundant, more sincere tokens of sorrow — and not tears only, but sobbings and wailings of grief arose from poor creatures, when they beheld, for the last time, that face which was never turned toward them but in compassionate sympathy.

Then, the coffin-lid replaced and the national flag folded round it, the eight young seamen bore the body of their beloved captain to its resting-place beneath the scarlet and gold of October.

Sandy McGregor and myself, together with the worthy couple with whom the captain had so long resided, were his chief mourners. After us, came Mr. Buckminster, Mr. Beals, and many of the employés of the house, followed by a long

line of private carriages, and a delegation from the Masonic lodge to which the captain belonged.

On the way to the cemetery, Sandy, who, for most of the time, was wrapped in profound thought, suddenly burst out, with a flash in his deep-set eyes, —

“Did ye mind what the old priest said about they miserable creatures — outcasts and the like — the captain was always bothering himself with? Well, it’s often and often I told him they things would be the death of him. Yes; over and over again, I told him that he may as well try to bale out the sea or fill a sieve with water as hope to do any good for the likes of them. It’s simply impossible, and that’s all there is about it, I told him.

“But no, oh, no! Not him; he would no listen to me, no more than the wind whistling. Ah, man! his heart was too big for his head; and that was the trouble with him.

“Ah, well! I never knew what a true friend was till the captain fell foul of me; and if he hadn’t, just when he did, what Sandy McGregor would be now, God only knows! ’Twas in the dens of iniquity he found me; ay, indeed, and it’s to him I owe, under God, all I am this day.

“Ah, well, well! he couldn’t help doing just as he did. It was the nature of the man, ye see. And so, perhaps, Father Burke isn’t so far out of the way after all.”

No more pitiful object could be seen than Sandy at the grave of the captain. His strong Scotch face was almost colorless, and his gray eyes, shaded by shaggy brows, gazed into vacancy with an expression of utter hopelessness. God

only knows to what extent he shares his friend's sublime faith ; but to all appearance, his religion consists in an almost canine devotion and fidelity to "the captain." To him, "the captain" was all in all ; there was no one like "the captain," and there never would be again. I am persuaded that if he could have accompanied "the captain" into the Unseen, he would have gladly done so. His last words, as our little group of mourners was about to separate, were, "Aw, mon, but it's a cauld warrl'd for Sandy noo !"

* * *

It only remains to be added, that shortly after the captain's death, the Mission was conducted by a Society composed of members of various denominations, who, after no little searching, found a zealous and acceptable leader. Eventually, a "Bethel" was erected for seafaring men and their families, and also a large, well-arranged, and carefully-managed boarding-house and reading-room, known as the "Antle Home for Sailors." These with, perhaps, a mariner's hospital in a sea-side suburb, are all, more or less, the outcome of George Antle's efforts and perpetual monuments of his Christian faith and philanthropic zeal. 'Tis thus —

"the memory of the just
Smells sweet and blossoms in the dust."

Nor is it by such results alone that the full value of a life like Captain Antle's should be estimated. Churches, insti-

tutions, societies, individuals may be placed in evidence and easily tabulated; but who can trace INFLUENCE through all its ramifications? Who can watch the quickening and growth of that seed which is sown in the hearts and consciences of men?



AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth :
for the first heaven and the first earth
were passed away ; and there was no more
sea. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jeru-
salem, coming down from God out of heaven, pre-
pared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I
heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold
the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will
dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and
God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,
nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain :
for the former things are passed away.



